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The last of the Catholic O'Malleys, a tale



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THE LAST



OF THE

CATHOLIC O'MALLEYS.

A TALE

BY

M. TAUNTON.



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AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO MY DEAR
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THE LAST OF THE CATHOLIC O'MALLEYS.

CHAPTER I.

IN a darkened room, from which the bright July's evening sun had been excluded, lay a man, hardly in his fortieth year, dying of a broken heart.

His wife sat by his side, whose countenance showed the effects of the trials and sorrows she had passed through, by its stern and unbending expression; and although she knew that in a few hours at most she should have to part with her husband, yet no tear dimmed her eye, nor nervous tremour prevented her attending fully and ably to the duties of the sick room.

She was not alone with the object of her solicitude; his old nurse was quietly moving about, fixing this thing and that, in the apartment, but sensitively alive to the least motion of the invalid. Therefore, when he turned his head, and said, in a low voice, "Norah," she was at his side in a moment.

"And what is it, allannah,* that you would have?"

"Norah, where is Grace? Send for her."

His wife said, "I sent her, Tom, into the garden. The poor child wanted air. What do you want her for?"

"I want to see her once more, Ann. I am going fast, and I must speak with our child before I die."

Norah quickly left the room to fulfil his wish, whilst his wife poured out a draught of his composing medicine, supposing that he felt ill or weaker by what he said. He took it from her hand patiently enough, and, after she had laid him back again on his pillow, he said—

"It is no use, dear wife; I feel that I am going fast! Is Father Joe here still?"

"He is, my dear."

"He had better come to me," whispered the sick man; but, scarcely were the words out of his mouth, before the door opened, and admitted Norah, the priest, and Grace: the latter hastened to her father, saying: "What is it, father dear?"

The father took her hand in his, but for a moment could not speak; at length, and with

* A term of endearment.

difficulty, he said: "I want to say good bye, Grace; I am going to leave you!"

The girl threw herself on her knees by the bed side; burying her face in the bed clothes, and convulsively grasping her father's hand.

"Oh! no, father darling; I cannot part with you yet. You must not leave your Gracey!"

The dying man was showing signs of intense agitation, more than his feeble frame could bear, when the mother came round to the side of her daughter, and whispered, "Grace, you will hasten your father's death if you do not command your feelings better; or you will have to leave the room."

In a moment, Grace rose from her knees, and wiping her eyes, did her best to control the grief to which she had at first abandoned herself.

Mrs. O'Malley administered a restorative, and wiped the death dew from her husband's forehead. Stimulated by the strengthening draught, he said to his child, in feeble accents:

"Oh, Gracey, my only pain is that you are not a boy; that I might tell you never to forget that your father died of a broken heart, caused by the wicked laws of the country; that I might leave you the only legacy I have to leave

—that of revenging me on the wicked robber of my home.”

The voice of the dying man became loud and clear, from excitement, as he said, “As you value my blessing, child, promise that you will never marry, but on the condition that he you marry will act a son’s part, and revenge me on the foul robber of my rights.”

“Stop, my son,” said the venerable grey headed priest. “Stop, my son, that impious injunction on your child ! ‘Vengeance is mine,’ said the Lord ; I will repay !’ Leave it in His hands, and learn to imitate Him, who prayed for his enemies ; let better thoughts occupy you now. Remember in whose presence you soon will stand, and think of asking mercy for yourself, not vengeance on others !”

The sick man’s energy was gone ; but he muttered, “ ’Tis true, Father Joe ; it is true ; and may I be forgiven the impious wish, as you say ; let us pray, that I may obtain mercy. I thought that I had freely forgiven my enemies when you were with me last ; but the thought of leaving these two so badly provided for, roused within me the sinful desire. Pray with me.”

“We will, Tom, we will ; and don’t fear to leave your widow and orphan in His care, who

ceeds even the birds of the air! Now, Mrs. O'Malley, and Grace, kneel down, and let us say the prayers for the departing." They did so, and hardly had he got to that beautiful portion of the prayers for the dying, "Depart, Christian brother," than the dying man cast a fond look on his wife and child, and, closing his eyes, the spirit of the last of the Catholic O'Malleys was gone to its Maker.

Mrs. O'Malley rose up, her face still untear-stained, closed her husband's eyes, and left the room. Not so Grace. With all the abandonment to grief natural in so young a girl (she was only between thirteen and fourteen), she threw herself on her father's corpse, screaming with agony, and calling on him to come back.

The gentle old priest was deeply moved himself—for he had known Tom O'Malley all his life, being cousin to the deceased man's father. He had also acted as tutor to Tom; therefore, to his tender heart, it was as if he had parted with a dear son. Still, he had learnt the lesson of self-control, and was able to forget his own feelings, and occupy himself with poor Grace, whom he took in his arms and carried from the room, giving her to the care of a servant, whilst he returned and gave directions to Norah, the faithful old nurse,

about the last sad offices, which she would not permit any one to help her in the performance of.

CHAPTER II.

I NEED not describe the next few mournful days, nor the funeral rites ; suffice it to say, that all the peasantry from Mallerina who could come, came, to show respect "to the Master" (as they still called him), although some had to walk twelve Irish miles ; and, although, as was customary in those days, the hired keeners (as they were called) were there, they need not have attended, for there were real and heartfelt mourners enough on the occasion. A few days after the last duty had been performed to Tom O'Malley, and that Father Joe had announced that now he must no longer stay with them, Grace, perceiving him walking in the garden alone, went out to him ; for the words her father had addressed to her were fresh in her memory ; and as she had not understood to what he had alluded, she was determined to ascertain from his old friend and relative, before he left, what was the history

of that vengeance to which her father had alluded so strongly, and with so much feeling.

You will, perhaps, think that Grace was too young for such a thing to have made so much impression; but, hearing such words on so solemn an occasion, and their being almost her father's last words to her, of course they made a very strong and indelible impression. Moreover, in Ireland, in those days, as on the Continent, girls became mature much sooner than now, or at least than they are considered to do now-a-days; and being an only child, she had been the constant companion of her parents.

"Dear Father Joe, tell me, what revenge was it my dear father was urging on me? I do not like to speak to my mother on the subject, but thought that I would ask you."

"For what purpose do you wish to know, Gracey? Surely you do not mean to notice a few words, said in excitement by a dying man, and which he repented of as soon as he had said them?"

"Oh, no, Father Joe! *surely* you do not think that I forget, or that I shall ever forget the beautiful words you said about it? Moreover, what could a girl do, even were I to wish

to do as he said? I have never heard of my father's troubles. I can remember for the last four years, in fact ever since we came here to Galway, that my parents have been in sorrow and trouble. They have never touched upon the subject; but, Father Joe, I want you to tell me all about it."

"Yes, my child, I will; I think that it is right you should know what provocation your poor father had had to make him, even for a moment, forget his religious teaching; and how he had, only the day before, when receiving the last sacrament, forgiven those who had so deeply injured him—and deeply injured poor Tom has been; however, you shall judge for yourself.

"I must begin at the beginning. Your father, at the age of eighteen, inherited, from his father, the large and ancient estate called Mallerina; the largest in Ireland, extending for sixty Irish miles, and one also of the most flourishing and richest.

"As the agent whom his father had employed was old, and wished on the death of his patron to retire, Tom (for so I will call your father—it is more familiar to me) appointed a cousin, who solicited the office, to the management of the estate, as an assistance he much needed;

and as, also, if your father had had no heir, Robin O'Malley would be his heir, Tom thought that it would be a judicious choice. I remember his telling me about it, and how I had my misgivings on the subject; for I knew Robin to be of a grasping, ambitious, and irreligious character; so I made my objections to Tom, but not very warmly; for I thought that perhaps it was prejudice on my part. Well, Tom was at that time engaged to your mother—as lovely and fine a girl as was to be seen in the countryside, and a Lynch to boot. She was very young—merely sixteen; so it was decided that Tom should travel—make the grand tour, as was usual for young men of station to do—and then return and marry Ann Lynch. Having settled every thing with his agent Robin O'Malley, and taken a tender farewell of the girl he loved; your father volunteered into a regiment of the line, and started on his travels.

“Everything went on at first as it should; that is, did so for two or three years. Remittances were duly sent as required; and Tom began to write to his *fiancée* how soon he should be turning his steps to where his heart always was, namely, to her; but that, as the regiment had received fresh orders to march for * * *,

he could not just fix his time for returning to Ireland.

“All of a sudden, whether Tom had been led into racing or gambling, we knew not, but demands for heavy sums were made by him to his agent; and, after a due delay, they were sent to him, but accompanied by the avowal that, to meet his demands, sundry houses on the estate—different farms—had had to be sold to realize the sum required.

“At length, after another four or five years had passed, the agent had to write that he could no longer remit these extra monies—that every available piece of land had been either sold or mortgaged.

“Extremely annoyed and indignant, Tom left the regiment and hastened home. He found that the wily Robin had been the purchaser of each piece of land that had been sold, and *that*, at such low figures as to be almost nominal sales. Indignant at being thus robbed, and also that it had been done without the sanction of his guardians (I was one), by our advice Tom threw the whole affair into Chancery.

“In the meantime I must tell you of another disappointment that awaited your father on his return home; and that was, that during his absence, Ann Lynch had had the smallpox, which

had so disfigured her that all her beauty was gone. She did not hold him to his promise ; but Tom was too honourable to allow such an affliction to his betrothed to alter his feelings towards her, or to allow her to think that his love had been solely for the handsome face. ' Hang it, Ann ! ' said he, when he went to see her, (as she told me afterwards), ' I did not think that it was so bad as this ; but a bargain is a bargain, and I suppose that your heart is still all right ! '

" There was little doubt of that, and they married at once ; and he took her home at once to Castle Joana.

" The lawsuit dragged on, as Chancery suits always do, for ten or eleven years. At last, worn out with waiting so long, your father went up to Dublin, and succeeded in obtaining a commission to come down to Mallerina and settle the disputed points.

" All was going on well in Tom's favour, and Robin was expected to have to disgorge his ill-gotten wealth, when *I* was seen one morning leaving the castle at an early hour. Notice was given by a spy, who had been set on to watch the castle (to notice those who went in or out), that a priest had been seen one Sunday morning coming away from saying mass for

Mr. O'Malley. On hearing this the commission gave notice, that by harbouring a priest, and hearing mass, Mr. O'Malley had forfeited all rights of citizenship; nor could the law recognize him.

" Luckily one of the commission was a friend of Tom's, so he urged the others to make this matter known to Mr. O'Malley, who was able to prove that no mass had been said on that day; nor was he cognizant of my visit to the castle. Through the intervention of the friendly commissioner things were allowed to go on as before the interruption, and now we were all hope again; nay, even felt a certainty of success, when, Oh! how shall I tell you, the thunder-clap we received by poor Tom's receiving a notice, that as Mr. Robin O'Malley had been to the magistrate's and *recanted*, and, moreover, had received at the church the *Lord's Supper*, he had become entitled, as next heir, to all the lands, tenements, &c., &c., commonly known as Mallerina; and that the recusant Papist was called upon to give up the same on such a day to our trusty and well-beloved Robin O'Malley," &c., &c.

CHAPTER III.

“ You cannot realize our feelings, dear child ! The horror that Robin could sell his soul in such a base manner, and defraud the man who had been his benefactor, befriending him when he wanted assistance, as I said, ‘ who could believe in such depravity ? ’

“ Of course, at the first moment, poor Tom swore that he would raise the country rather than submit to such injustice ; and such was the state of feeling among the tenants and the peasantry, that it would have been an easy matter ; for the wretched Robin did not dare to show himself on the land ; and he had to petition the government to send a guard of a regiment, quartered in Galway, to force the people to submit to his orders.

“ I flew to your father’s side immediately, as did other friends.

“ When we had well looked into the affair, and seen how hopeless was resistance, we urged him to leave Mallerina ; and by showing a due submission to government, and the law, he might petition, and hope to have the sentence revoked. I had the comfort of seeing, that not for one moment did it enter your father’s head, or heart, to imitate or circumvent his base cousin by a

counter recantation, a thing which was being done every day.

"The weeping and despoiled family removed to this house, living on the fortune your mother brought with her on her marriage, and which, of course, had nothing to do with Mallerina.

"This happened four years ago, and I cannot tell you how often, in that interval, poor Tom has petitioned, nor how often he has gone to Dublin to present the petition himself. Once he even went to London, and succeeded in thrusting his petition into the King's hand itself, but all was of no avail—he was a recusant Papist; and *his* petition could not be entertained, when against a good and loyal Protestant.

"Robin had married since his successful wickedness; and had, with great parade, his son and heir christened at the Protestant Church.

"I never left your poor father's side; I felt how dangerous it would be to leave him to himself, after his unsuccessful endeavour to obtain justice in London; for he returned to Dublin, vowing vengeance, and declaring that the *traitor* should not enjoy his ill-gotten riches.

"Oh! how I prayed that Providence would interfere to prevent his making matters worse, by useless, as well as sinful, attempts at revenge. In vain I said, 'leave it to God, Tom; be sure

He will punish the traitor ;' but no, at that moment, I might as well have spoken to a stone wall. However, my prayers were heard in another and a different way to the one I asked.

"A messenger had been sent to meet us in Dublin, to say that you were dying. Had your poor father one tender spot left in his poor tried heart, it was for you.

"Assuring me that his vengeance was only deferred, he hastened back to Galway, to find you despaired of. For several nights we watched, with your mother, your young life ; and how thankful I was on the night when the doctor had told us that the crisis had come, and that the next few hours would decide life or death for you. I was, as I said, so thankful to hear him whisper to me, 'Oh ! cousin Joe, I will forego my revenge, if the Lord, in His mercy, spare my child.'

" 'Repeat that,' said I ; and I pulled him on his knees, and held a crucifix before him ; and humbly and fervently he did so ; and kissed the image of his Redeemer.

"What a weight was removed from my heart ! But shall I ever forget the agony of that night, as we watched each breath you drew ? nor the sigh of relief we simultaneously gave, when your feverish restlessness gradually subsided

into a gentle sleep, which lasted three hours at least? Then you opened your eyes, and—as if to reward your loving father for the vow he had made—your first look was on him; and you smiled, as it seemed to me, a heavenly, peaceful smile. From that time you went on improving; but not so your father. The excitement over—both of your illness and his endeavours to regain his lost inheritance, and to punish the traitor Robin—he gradually failed in health; and you know the rest—how the last nine months he has been getting weaker and weaker, without any specific complaint; as he said himself, ‘He was dying of a broken heart!’”

CHAPTER IV.

GRACE’S eyes, more than once, showed how deeply she sympathized in her father’s and mother’s trials! And after Father Joe had finished his recital, they both remained silent for some time.

At length she broke the silence by saying, “Father Joe, how can it be possible that such a shameful and outrageously wicked deed could

be allowed—and by law, too? Who made this law? Was it this king?”

“No, Grace; this law was made by Elizabeth in order to exterminate the Catholics. It is a part of what is called the penal law, which makes me unable to preach or teach publicly the Catholic religion, though it is well known that it is the religion dear to the people of Ireland. It makes any Protestant able, if they meet a Catholic on horseback, and they take a fancy to that horse which he is riding, it enables him, I say, to tender the Catholic five pounds, and require him to dismount there and then, and hand it over to him, however averse he may be to part with the animal.”

“But, Father Joe, I have often wondered how we Irish have ever allowed ourselves to be conquered by the English. Are we not ten times braver than they are?”

“I will tell you why we were conquered. It was by *not holding together*. We were always quarrelling among ourselves—I mean our petty kings were—so that when Henry the Second came over to subdue us, he found it an easy task to discover a traitor; who, to revenge himself on his own brother, paved the way for the ruin of his country, and let in an enemy whom it was impossible to dislodge.

“As in Elizabeth’s time, they, to exterminate and disirishise (so to say) the people, enacted the penal laws—so Henry the Second, finding that the bards, who were the only depositories of the people’s history, and sang the warlike deeds of their ancestors to excite them to imitate their brave forefathers—so Henry, fearing to keep alive the love for the bards, and thus the love of country, ordered the long-flowing locks of the bards to be cut off, and thus did away with their distinctive mark and their glory. Some even left the country rather than submit, for it was the glory of the race of bards that, like the Nazareans of old, their hair had never been cut!”

“Oh,” said the old priest, “how shortsighted are these kings and statesmen who make such laws! They will not allow the peasant to be taught his religion, which would make him a good and peaceful subject (for although we Irish may not love our conquerors, still we are taught by St. Paul ‘to respect the powers that be’), and by preventing their having the means of learning to become practical Catholics, they destroy in them all religious feeling, they breed up a set of savages who have no restraint put on their evil passions, who will give way to revenge, nay, even look

upon the destruction of their oppressors as lawful!"

"Oh, my country!" cried the old man, raising his hands towards heaven in a supplicatory manner. "Oh, my country! I foresee all the evils attending thee in the future. At present your altars are thrown down—your priests are skulking in the bye-ways—they must not show themselves!"

"How, then, can men reverence religion, when they see its ministers degraded and proscribed? It is true a few of the old faithful Catholics will love their holy religion the more for the persecutions it undergoes; but the rising generation, it is for them that I grieve. What will they know about their faith? It is true that they will have learnt from their fathers that they are Catholics—that they must never give that faith up; they will stick to that name as something by which to thwart their conquerors, their *hated* oppressors! But, practically, what good will that be? Will calling themselves Catholics teach them its sublime truths? make them patient under provocation and trial? You, Grace, may live to see the day when the Irish will force their masters to remove these oppressive laws. I shall be long before that in my grave; but, as I said, you

may live to see the day when the people will rise with one accord, and force the English to restore their altars and give them their just and natural position! But oh! I fear that my countrymen will have gone through a baptism of blood, will have been degraded to the very lowest depth of irreligion ere they rise again!

"But they will rise, and the faith that they have kept but in name will raise them to their former condition. Ireland will be again the nursery of sanctity and learning!

"Oh that I might see the day! But yet I should have first to endure all the previous sorrow, and who knows whether I should remain faithful? Therefore I ought to be thankful that I am spared the trial."

"And where are you now going, Father Joe? Why must you leave us?"

"My child, I must go. I go to seek out those faithful souls who are languishing for the consolations of our holy faith, who may be wanting the staff which is to sustain them on their perilous journey to their Maker. I go to console the afflicted—I go to weep with the sorrowful—I go to receive the new-born into the fold of Christ—I go to try, as far as I can, to fulfil the mission on which my Master sent me, before I lay me down in my turn.

"We must pray for each other, dear Grace; and should we never meet again in this world, let me have the comfort of thinking that Tom O'Malley's daughter will be a true daughter of Ireland—true to her religion—true to the practice of its benign rules."

"Dear Father Joe, surely you do not mean that we are not likely to meet again? Surely I must not think that I am to part with my second father, just as I have lost my own dear parent, and to part with you now for ever? Oh! don't leave your poor Gracey for long."

"I do not mean that I shall not try to see you again, Gracey; but life is so uncertain. I am old, and God knows what troubles await me, what hardships I may be called upon to bear, and how I shall be able to endure them. But pray, my child, that I may persevere even unto the end, and that, whenever Death calls me, it may be where a good priest ought to be found—at his post."

CHAPTER V.

GRACE long remembered her conversation with her father's old friend and relative. How often it made her wish that she was a man, that she

might strike a blow for the regeneration of her country. Later, she would learn that woman's mission is as efficacious towards that end as man's, nay, even more so; for has she not the forming of the mind and principles of those who are to serve and guide that country, and to fight for it?

I have never described my heroine; for, of course, Grace is my heroine, and it is her adventures and trials which are to make the interest of this tale. I suppose I must try to describe her; though, as one is always expected to make a hero or heroine something out of the common, and beautiful, for variety sake, I should prefer leaving it to the imagination of my reader; however, as some would be disappointed, I must just say that she was simply lovely! She was called the beautiful Miss O'Malley.

In some respects it was not the beauty that is usually seen in Ireland, and in Mallerina in particular, namely, brilliant complexion and dark hair. Grace had the complexion, but not the black hair; hers was of that beautiful brown, with a yellow tinge, that looks as if the sun was shining on it—a shade of brown so seldom seen. Her eyes were dark grey; her height above the middle size: and that is about all I can detail of my heroine.

Grace and her mother continued to live in the house we first saw them in.

The widow deeply mourned her husband, though she never mentioned his name, not even to her daughter. Sorrow had hardened her character (which had been one of those *lassez-vous* natures), and she became stern and embittered. She concentrated all her feelings on her own hardships. She felt that fate had been very cruel to her, first by spoiling her beauty, and then by depriving her of that station and those appliances which the wealth she had been so unjustly deprived of would have been able to procure for her.

She was fond of power that gave her no trouble to assert, and of taking the lead in everything. What was she now in her comparative poverty? Oh! it was a bitter disappointment to her—this sinking into insignificance, after enjoying, even for the short time it had been hers; the honours of such a position as that of Mrs. O'Malley, of Mallerina.

I want you to understand the kind of woman Mrs. O'Malley was; and the tone of command she would take over a being so gentle as her own daughter.

As you may suppose, there was little sympathy between mother and daughter; though

Grace always paid her that duty and deference, even in her thoughts, which was never for one moment deviated from in olden days, by any child, well and carefully brought up, but which is so lamentably wanting now-a-days. She never for a moment disputed her mother's right to regulate her actions and dispose of her future. She knew that her mother looked upon her as a something she had to provide for—she had often told her so; and that, as long as she looked well after her worldly interest, and saw, that poor as she now was, that Miss O'Malley made a suitable marriage, she should feel that she had done her duty by her. As to the girl herself having a word to say in the matter, it never entered Mrs. O'Malley's head that such a thing could be dreamt of.

This, you will say, is very like the foreign system; so it is; and the Irish had many customs (I supposed derived from the Spaniards), especially in the west, that were foreign to the English.

After all, I have my doubts as to which system is the most likely to secure that happiness the married state is supposed to ensure; the leaving young persons to choose for themselves, or their parents doing so for them.

The Divorce Court does not speak strongly

for our plan, in securing happy *matches* ! Do the French as often seek to dissolve the ties their parents have deemed best and suitable for them ? *Il reste à savoir !*

CHAPTER VI.

THE first family in the neighbouring county—Sligo—were the O'Donnells. They owned the largest estate in the neighbourhood of the town of Sligo. There were only two sons ; the elder, already married, but without any family ; and the younger brother, who, of course, was looked upon as the heir, Mrs. O'Malley had fixed upon for her daughter.

Times being so changed with her, she was too proud to be the one to open negotiations on the subject with the O'Donnell family, as she would formerly have done ; so she had to wait until, as she hoped, the proposition would come from the O'Donnells themselves. She had not miscalculated on the attractions of her daughter. Edward O'Donnell had, himself, come to the determination of appropriating the beautiful Miss O'Malley ; and the widow hailed with joy his overtures for the hand of Grace, and as it was just such a marriage in a worldly sense as

a Miss O'Malley might be expected to make, her mother was not for a moment deterred in consenting and arranging it, by the knowledge that there was not, in the county, a more wild and dissipated young man than Edward O'Donnell.

He was very young, too, to bear such a character, being only eighteen ; yet it was said that at any of the heavy drinking bouts (so horribly common in the days I am writing of), that he was hardly ever outdone by the oldest stager ; and that, two or three times a week, these orgies beheld this young man the foremost in the riot and the debauch.

Yet it was to him, because it was a *suitable marriage*, that this cold, worldly woman, meant to confide poor Tom O'Malley's only child—the only link left of her poor husband ; and that about a year and a-half after his death. Was this fulfilling the trust he had left her ? to care for their child and supply his place to her ? Well, she thought that it was.

She arranged everything with him without mentioning the subject to Grace, and why, do you think ? Because she knew how the poor girl disliked the little she knew of Edward O'Donnell. It had happened, on more than one occasion, that Grace had come home from

some visit, or message she had been sent out upon, later than she had intended, and in accounting for her want of punctuality, she would make the excuse, "Oh, mother dear, I saw that horrid Edward O'Donnell coming down the street, so I just turned back and came home the long way, and that has made me late." Such speeches as the above were not uncommon, therefore Mrs. O'Malley knew her daughter's feelings on the subject; but it did not make her waver in her resolve, for it was a suitable marriage!

When the thought of his sad habit of intemperance would intrude itself, she silenced her conscience by saying—"When he is married it will be different. Young men will be young men, and must sow their wild oats."

I fear that Mrs. O'Malley has, even in these enlightened and practical days, many who stifle their judgment and common sense by such fallacies, and confide the happiness of their daughters to as frail barks, with as little likelihood of their hopes being realized.

Is it that mothers feel their honour concerned in settling their daughters in marriage as quickly as possible after they leave the school-room, no matter to what kind of a man, as long as he is rich? It does not matter,

his antecedents! "Oh! he is no worse than others!" "She must cure him of his bad ways!" Such are the answers one gets if a doubt is raised as to the advisability of such a marriage, or the chances of a girl's happiness being endangered, trusted in such hands. Have they, who speak thus, found that their mothers were right when they used the same arguments about the husband chosen in their own case? Oh! you cannot say so; nor can I for you. When I look at the careworn and sometimes hopeless expression on the faces of some married women I know; the cold, every now and then, "my dear," said with averted eye to the man whom they were to model into everything a man, a husband, ought to be; and to make into a loving, unselfish, self-denying partner as soon as they married him, tells volumes—needs no proof that they have failed. Ah, no indeed! Your experience has taught you that a bad, an unholy youth, an unbridled giving way to passion, a want of principle, holds out but slender hopes of any one, out of such material, forming a model man, a good husband, a happy household.

What you have found impossible to achieve, oh, mothers! namely, being able to reform a bad man—what on earth makes you expect

your poor child to do it? What greater means has she than you had? You know, that is if you allow yourselves to think about it, that you are only cheating yourselves. You know full well that he will remain, at least for the best years of her poor young life, what he is, when you give her to him. Then, in the name of all that is womanly, why do you do it? Often it is to secure for your daughters the best match of the season, instead of allowing Mrs. * * * * to triumph over you. It is this unworthy motive which often makes you sacrifice the young affections and happiness of your children; but oh! do think what an unhallowed sacrifice to Mammon.

CHAPTER VII.

GRACE had been spending the day out with a young friend; her mother sent her early, but enjoined her to be sure to return home by six in the evening, not later. Of course she was exact to the time.

She was met at the door of her house by her aunt (Mrs. O'Malley's sister), who took her by the hand, and said "Come up stairs with me."

She followed her aunt, wondering what this meant. Her aunt went on before her, straight into Grace's bedroom. A glance showed Grace a new dress laid out on her bed, and the several adjuncts on the dressing-table.

She turned quickly to her aunt, who did not give her time to ask what this meant, but answered her inquiring look by saying, "I want to dress you, Grace, for you are going to be married." (Reader, this is no fiction ; it is a fact.)

"To be married ! and who to ? Not to that horrid Edward O'Donnell ?"

"Yes, Grace, to Edward O'Donnell ; and you must not be so silly as to speak of him in that way. It is the best match in the county, and your mother wishes it ; nay, she intends you to marry him ; so don't be silly."

The poor girl threw herself on the floor in a paroxysm of tears.

"Oh, I never can ! I never can ! I hate him."

Her aunt stood by until Grace had exhausted herself, and when she could make her listen to her, she said—

"My dear girl, the priest and all the company will be here in half-an-hour. Your mother will be coming up soon to see if you

are ready ; and you know, Grace, that it is no use disobeying her. When you are married, you will like him better than you think you shall now ; besides, surely you don't want to make yourself the laughing-stock of the county, by letting them all see that you were obliged to marry ? for marry him you must, as your mother says that you are to do so ; so dry your eyes. Here, bathe them ; don't let your mother see that you are not a dutiful daughter, and that you are murmuring at her wishes, after all the pains she has taken to secure for you this good marriage. Besides, think what a nice home you may have when Edward comes in for the estate ; and now the nice home you are going to—the house is all ready—you will so much admire everything. Here—here is your mother, make haste to bathe your eyes ; don't let her see that you have been crying."

In this way, and using such like arguments, the aunt hurried on the poor girl. At last, her toilette completed, notwithstanding the several break-downs, which her aunt sought to counter-act by sal-volatile, &c., she suffered herself to be led down stairs, to obey the summons they received. As she entered the room she saw that Mr. O'Donnell the elder, and his wife, another sister, and a niece of her mother's, the

bridegroom, and the priest constituted the party assembled. She shrinkingly drew back as the ardent gaze of admiration cast upon her by Edward O'Donnell met her eye. Her aunt pressed her hand, and whispered in a low voice, "For goodness sake don't disgrace us all, and make a fool of yourself."

Her mother came forward—took her hand, and kissed her forehead. It was enough—the flood-gates again were unloosed—and she threw herself into her mother's arms, saying, "Oh! mother! mother! don't send me away from you!" Her mother coldly drew herself back, and leading the weeping girl towards the temporary altar, signed to the Priest to begin!!

It is over!! The bride of fifteen is clasped in her husband's arms! The rest of the guests left the room, but Mrs. O'Malley was instantly recalled—for Grace had fainted! Edward O'Donnell was beside himself with fright! Mrs. O'Malley calmed him by saying, "That it would soon be all right! that it was only natural, her being taken so by surprise—that she would soon recover!"

When sufficiently able to be talked to, her mother told her that she now belonged to Edward O'Donnell; that she was a lucky girl; that if she did not let him come in, and speak

affectionately to him, that he would take a dislike to her, &c., &c., &c.

Poor thing! she no longer struggled against what she knew was inevitable; and consented to be led into the supper-room, which had been prepared for the feast, or, as poor Grace would have said, for the sacrifice!

The guests kindly left the young bride to herself, thinking that it was excessive shyness, and love of her mother, that caused her emotion; so they kept up an animated conversation among themselves, which gave her time to recover herself.

Marriages always took place in the evening, and also in the private dwellings of the parties, especially of Catholics; though they would have to go to the Protestant church, either before or after their own ceremony had been performed, to render their marriages legal.

The carriage was at the door, all too soon to take the unwilling bride to the house of her husband; but she offered no resistance; she felt too miserable—too done up—to make any. Even parting with her mother barely made the tears come into her eyes—at least, I do not think that it was really parting from her mother that caused them to start, but rather the leaving the home that she had known as her father's.

No, her mother's unkindness, in repulsing all her tenderness, drove back to her heart all filial feelings of affection, and made her able to command herself sufficiently to listen to all her husband's rapture at at last possessing what he had so longed for—his own Grace! and to respond to the good wishes of her and his relatives, as they said good-bye at the carriage door.

Edward O'Donnell, *au fond*, was a good-hearted fellow; and when sober, full of love for his beautiful child bride, and also full of contrition for his weakness in allowing himself to be led into scenes of riot and debauchery. He was full of good resolutions for the future—a future that never came to him—I mean a future of amending and giving up his evil companions! He had this peculiarity, when he was only half-tipsy, and able to speak and walk, however imperfectly—that he was like a madman!! At first, of course, Grace did not know this, but she bitterly learnt his ways!

He had kept away from his old haunts; he had courageously refused all invitations for about three months (Mrs. O'Malley was pluming herself that after all she was right; that marriage *had* reformed him), when one day he did not come home to dinner as Grace had

expected. She waited for him, hour after hour, until the night was well advanced, when she heard his footstep coming up the stairs. She ran on to the landing, saying: "Oh! Edward, where have you been. What has kept you so late?"

Hardly had she spoken before she saw the state he was in. I cannot repeat the words he said; but it ended in his knocking her down, and kicking her brutally, until he stumbled and fell on the floor, where he lay unable to rise; and she, poor creature, crept away, and out of the room, locking herself in a spare one, near her own; so frightened was she that he would follow her.

But she need not have feared, for he could not get on his legs again; but by degrees fell fast asleep on the floor.

The next morning poor Grace was too frightened to open the door, when she heard her husband moving about his room, having slept himself sober; and then she heard him go down stairs, and presently call her. She feared to go to him; yet went, dreading to excite his anger by not obeying his summons. He was full of contrition; and so disarmed her indignation by throwing himself on his knees, and humbly begging her to forget his weakness in

allowing himself to be led into joining a drinking party, that you would have been sorry for him. When he perceived the bruise on her shoulder, he made her tell him all about it. What could Grace say or do but try to console him, and assure him that she knew that it would not happen again; that he would be her own brave husband, who would resist and not go near those wicked men who would force him to drink!

Poor young wife! she did really lay the blame (poor loving heart) upon those who enticed him.

CHAPTER V.

THE demon taken back, or I should have said the door once more opened to the demon, he was not so easy to get rid of; and another unexpected offence, in about three weeks after the scene we have described, made Grace tremble for the consequences. This time she knew better than to go near him, although he was shouting her name as loud as he could, as he came up the stairs. She was so terrified at the noise he made that she crept under the bed; and after he had looked for her all about, as

well as an intoxicated man could be said to look, he threw himself, dressed as he was, on the bed, still shouting for Grace ; and swearing at her for not coming to him.

By degrees the shouts became fainter and fainter, and she knew that he had fallen asleep, by his thick stertorous breathing.

Can you picture to yourself that poor young thing, as she lay huddled up under the bed ; trembling at every shout ; shuddering at every awful oath he uttered. Although she felt sure that he slept, yet she dared not move. Towards morning she actually fell asleep, lying there.

What a cold she caught lying all night under the bed ! but it was ten times better than what she had before experienced ; and she told me that she adopted that plan of escaping his violence when he came home sufficiently sober to walk. But, alas ! sometimes he was even carried home in a state of insensibility, and it did not matter where she was then.

The second year of their marriage a son was born to them, but she went to her mother's house for her confinement, so afraid was she to run the risk of a scene with her husband, for now he was giving way two or three times a week to the debasing vice of insobriety.

When sober, his love for Grace was as ardent as ever, and his delight in his little boy was extreme. Grace would have wished to have her infant nursed at home; but as was the custom in those days, even more than at present, no lady nursed her own child, her husband wished it to go to the house of his own foster-mother, where the woman's daughter would undertake the nursing. So Grace was obliged to give in, both to the unnatural custom and her husband's wish. It seemed unreasonable to object, as the nurse only lived a mile from the town.

You may imagine what a delight this babe was to the young mother. Oh, how she prayed that she might know how to preserve him from his father's deadly sin;—how, when she was keeping one of her vigils under the bed, she would promise herself the comfort of going to see her tiny Edward next morning, to make up for the present grief.

She did not particularly like the old nurse (the foster mother), for the old woman did not take to her. She had not thought Grace half good enough for her darling foster-son. "She knew that even if she did come of the best stock, sure she had not brought him a penny!"

But I think it was as much jealousy which

made her not like Grace, because, taken up with his wife (in his sober moments) he did not go so often to see her, nor so often take her little presents as he had formerly done. So she almost disliked Grace, and was very touchy if she noticed anything about the child, and fancied that her going so often to see it was because she did not trust her. Still the boy thrived, and was the delight and joy of his mother's heart, and perhaps I ought to say of his father's also.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN they had been married about three years and nine months, Edward came home one day and told Grace that he had been invited to Mr. Kelly's annual dinner.

As it was one of those houses where the host placed so much wine in the room, locked the door, and then declared that they should not move until it was all consumed, Grace implored her husband not to accept the invitation.

"Nonsense; did she think that he did not know how to avoid taking more than was good for him? (Alas, the usual boast and presumption of the habitual drunkard!) It was true

that he had very often allowed himself to be induced to take a bottle more than was good for him; but he had now found out the way to deceive them, and not take more than was good for him. She should see how he could, and would, keep his promise. It would be so affronting to Mr. Kelly, if, for the first time, he failed to be present at his annual entertainment, he could not do it."

So he kissed her, telling her not to sit up. "But, upon his word, now that he thought of it, he need not have said that, for he should come home quite early." Alas! poor Grace knew the value to attach to such grand promises.

She went to bed early, thinking that she had better get as much sleep as she could before he came home.

She was awoke about three in the morning by the heavy trampling of steps coming up the stairs. She had just time to throw on her dressing-gown, when a knock came to her door.

On opening it she saw what she never forgot in her life—her husband lying as pale as death on a shutter, the blood flowing out of his mouth!

She had always great presence of mind, nor

did it fail her on this trying occasion ; so her first words were, "The doctor !"

"Plaze, my lady, Tim Burke ran for him whilst we came on."

She helped to lay him, shutter and all, on the bed, and breathlessly awaited the doctor's arrival, not being sure whether he was alive or dead. Oh ! the dreadful suspense awaiting the doctor ! Who, that has lived to middle life, but can appreciate her suffering ?

After a minute examination, the doctor told her that it was a vessel on the lungs that Mr. O'Donnell had ruptured ; he stayed some hours by his side to watch the case, to the great comfort of our heroine.

As soon as she could, Grace slipped out of the room, and questioned the servant of Mr. Kelly, who still remained in the house, in order to hear the doctor's opinion, and to take word to his master how Mr. O'Donnell progressed.

She found, by dint of cross-questioning the man, who was at first unwilling to speak, that it was when they were all in a sad state of inebriety, that some one of the party had proposed, for a bet, that they should try who could lift a heavy marble pillar that stood in a corner of the room, and at the same time, be able to cry out, "Ireland for ever !" sufficiently loud

to be heard at the end of the lawn, where he, the man servant, was stationed to listen, and to say when he heard the words.

He heard poor Edward O'Donnell; but, alas! as he lifted the heavy weight, and shouted in stentorian tones the words, he suddenly let the weight fall from his hands, and fell to the ground, the blood pouring from his mouth.

The fright sobered some of the less intoxicated, and they hastily placed him on a shutter, and sent him home; as we have seen.

What need to dilate on the five or six weeks poor Edward lasted! for, indeed, that was as long as he held out. What need to speak of the bitter repentance he felt for his young life so ruthlessly wasted! Why speak of his anguish at the thought of leaving his young wife; and to think what scenes of sorrow and fear he had made her pass through, when he had so faithfully promised to make her a happy and joyous home!

"Oh!" he often cried, the tears rolling down his poor sunken cheeks: "Oh! Grace, my angel, I don't deserve all the care you are bestowing on me; how can you bear to look at me? Will God ever forgive me?"

She tried to comfort him; and, oh! how she wished she knew where Father Joe was, to send for him to prepare her poor Edward to appear

before his Maker : to show him how he was to obtain sincere sorrow, not for the leaving her, but for the sins he had committed in his mis-spent life !

She did her best to remember all that she had heard Father Joe say to her own father. She prayed constantly for and with him. She sent everywhere to try and find a priest—but, alas, they were so hiding about, that it was impossible to find them. There had been more chance in the country places than in towns. Alas ! alas ! but Grace excited him all she could to contrition ; and we must hope that her prayers were heard for him, as he died quietly, holding her hand in his, and praying for forgiveness with his last breath.

Yes, Edward O'Donnell died just a few months over twenty-one years of age ; another victim of that cruel infatuation—a love of drink. For it surely is an infatuation for the time being. How dearly do those who allow it to enslave them pay for giving way to its false pleasures ! The pain and distress of mind that makes a man so ashamed of having been so weak and unmanly, not to speak of the remorse of conscience, to one even commonly well brought up, surely these feelings must well counter-balance any sort of satisfaction of boasting of

being able to drink more than others. The worst part of it, putting aside the sin, is the misery it brings on all around them—the innocent victims of their selfish indulgence.

CHAPTER VII.

OF course, during her husband's illness, Grace had often had the comfort of the help and company of her brother-in-law and his wife. They truly pitied the young wife, and did all in their power to assist her. After the last sad offices had been performed, they made her go back to Waterdale with them, the name of their home; and took also the nurse and baby, to be a comfort to Grace, who stayed some weeks with them, until it was necessary to go back to her own house.

She would have kept her boy with her, instead of sending him back; but, as her husband had especially wished the child to remain for some longer time with the nurse, she did not like to make any alteration in the present plan, but promised herself that in a couple of months he should be with her for good.

Grace did not very much like the nurse: she had no real fault to find with the woman; but

she saw that she herself was no favourite with her husband's foster-mother.

The truth was, that Mrs. O'Birn had a large share of that failing in the Irish character yclept jealousy ; and she had fancied that her nursling did not care for her now that he had the young wife. He did not go so often to see her, nor take "the little token" a smart ribbon or "the likes," as he used to do ; so she was ready to take offence at anything Grace did or said.

During his illness, when she insisted upon staying one night to nurse him, she so completely put the wife aside, and wanted to do all for him herself, that Grace had firmly, though quietly, to assume her right place ; and the woman was so exasperated, that she suddenly appealed to the sick man, who, of course, could not but take his wife's part.

Nurse looked desperately, wickedly, at the "woman as has gone betwixt me and my own Master Edward, as I brought up from a weenshi babbie till he was tin years and more, he having no mother but myself ; but I'll not forget it to you, be sure, young madam !" This scene caused great agitation to the sick man, and Grace had to beg Nurse O'Birn to leave the room, which she had to do, but, as I before said, looking as if she would not forget the affront.

Another time, when she arrived to see poor Edward, Grace, before she admitted her, asked her not to notice the change that had taken place in his appearance; for, like many of her class, she was not very judicious in her remarks to the sick man, nor in failing to lament aloud "how he was wasting," &c. This gave her fresh offence; "as if she did not know how to speak to a sick man, indeed." So, in this temper, and whilst she was left to mind him for an hour or so, during which time Grace, quite worn out with fatigue and want of rest, went to lie down, Nurse asked Edward to exact a promise—indeed, to lay his commands upon his wife—that the child might be left with her some time longer, as the country air was the best for him; "and sure it will be my only comfort." She shrewdly guessed that Grace would be wanting to have the child with her when she had lost her husband. And so it was that Edward asked Grace to leave the child with Nurse.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRACE had been so absorbed in her melancholy duties in the sick room, that she had paid no attention to what was occupying every one's

mind at the time, namely, that a rebellion was ripe, and that the French, who had been invited over by the malcontents, had promised to make a descent on Ireland, landing at Sligo Bay. Indeed, those friends who were admitted to see her or her sick husband, did not think the subject one to bring into the chamber of death. But now that she had leisure to receive friends, and to interest herself in extraneous matters, she heard with dismay that they, the French, were daily expected.

One morning Mr. O'Donnell came and paid her an early visit.

"I suppose, Grace, that you have heard all these terrible rumours about the French coming?"

"Yes, James, I have; but are they true?"

"Quite so, I fear; and that is the reason that I have come to see you so early. I am going to remove from Waterdale for a time, because, you see, it is too near the bay; and, being so well known, I shall be called upon to take one side or the other. Now, as I feel sure that this is a useless and a rash act—the English will be sure to drive the French away—I do not want to be mixed up in it; for, depend upon it, that all those who have taken part in this mad attempt will have their property con-

fiscated, or have to pay heavy fines ; or, at the very least, have the regiments quartered on them. On the other hand, I do not want to lose my hold on the people's affection by openly siding with the English, so I have determined to leave Waterdale—that is, shut it up—and go to my fishing-box on Lake Ina till all this trouble has passed. It will not look singular, as I often go there for months ! Well, I came from my wife to say that you must come with us, for I promised poor Edward to be a father to you—therefore, cannot leave you behind. Will you be ready by to-morrow morning at ten ?”

“ Oh, James ! and what about my little Ned ?”

“ Well, I have thought of that too ; but it would not do to make much parade about our going ; so I thought that, as he is safe enough for a day or two, until we got settled down there, I could send Brady (an old butler, long in the family) over for him. So, Grace, be ready—it would not be safe for you to remain here ; and I have just called at your mother's, and told her that I would see to you. I find that she is going to Dublin with your aunt.”

Receiving Grace's promise to be ready at the hour appointed Mr. O'Donnell took his leave.

CHAPTER IX.

ALTHOUGH she had a great deal to do in packing away in the *cellars*, to hide them—all her valuables which she could not take with her—she found time to go on a car to see her little boy. He was well, and Nurse in a tolerably good humour. Still she could not account for the depression she felt, nor for the reason why she so often went back to have just one kiss more from her darling before she could make up her mind to leave him—still, she persuaded herself that it was natural that she should dislike going further away, even for a day or so from her treasure! and then, too, she felt weary and excited after all the morning's fatigue.

She had once more turned to leave, when the thought struck her, that she would give Nurse O'Birn a hint that baby would be sent for very soon, and that shortly she should be taking him altogether to herself—in order that Nurse might be prepared to give him up without further opposition. So once more she took the boy in her arms, and putting his arms round her neck, she said—

“Good bye, baby! but soon mamma will send for her boy, and have him at home all to herself.”

If she could have seen the start and scowl given by Nurse, she would not have gone away thinking how cleverly she had prepared Nurse for parting with little Teddie, as they called him—but would have wondered! and wondered! and yet, poor girl, never have guessed the evil thoughts and resolves she caused to rise in Nurse's jealous mind, nor the revengeful feelings that, having lain dormant so long, now awoke, as it were, to swift and deadly activity.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Mrs. Edward O'Donnell was fairly out of sight, Nurse—who had stood at the door, with the child, to watch her retreating figure—shook her finger *menacingly* after her, and said—

“Faith then, you shall not take him from me! His poor father gave him to me, and against your will, too; and don't I know it, milady, for Peggie, the maid, told me, so she did—because she heard the dispute you had about it; and, sure on his dying bed, he said to you in my hearing, to leave the babe with me, for I should be kind to it—and so I will, the darlint—and so like his poor father as he is!

But you shan't take him, however you think yourself mistress of me. And, to be sure, how is such a strip of a girl to know how to manage a big boy like this? What can you know about babbies? Mrs.—mistress, indeed!”

And Nurse O'Birn sat down, and cogitated over what she should do, and so deeply was she lost in thought, that she never heeded her daughter's entrance, nor her one or two attempts to get an answer to the question she was putting.

“Sure, mother, but then you must be asleep, baby and all!” and she came round in front of the chair her mother occupied, which caused the latter to start, saying—

“Katey, why do you come round one like that! Is it to startle me you did it?”

“Why, mother, I have been calling to you ever so often since I came in, and you did not answer me, so I came in front of you to see if you was asleep.”

“Asleep! And what should I be going to sleep for at this time of day? Teddie is asleep if you will, so turn down his cot till I put him into it.”

When she had done as desired, the daughter said—

“Sure then, mother, I've got something to

tell you. As I was passing Mick Doolan's, the post, ye know, I, just to look grand, asked if there was nare a letter for us, and I was so tokened when he looked and said—' Well, yez, to be sure there is ; you were expecting it, may be.' I did not let on to him how surprised I was, but took it, and told him I would bring the price to him the morrow."

"A letter! and sure who is it from? Open it, can't you, and read it for me, instead of standing there twiddling it about in your fingers that way."

The young woman did as she was bid, and sat down to read the letter, after taking great pains in the opening it, "for fear, to be sure, of tearing it too much."

Now, what I am going to tell you, I know, will appear as if I had made it up just to suit my story. But have you never, reader, been perfectly astounded at finding that some one will speak, some one will act, as if they knew what you were thinking about, or what your requirements were, just at the very time you wanted help? I am sure, that have you lived as long as I have, you must have often been struck by this strange coincidence. Whether it was an angel of light, or of darkness, that came to Nurse O'Birn's assistance, in adjusting the

difficulty she felt in, I shall leave you to decide for yourself; but, for my part, I cannot think the assistance which came so opportunely to her, and helped her to carry out her cruel plan, could have come but from one source!

To be very polite to him, I must say that "the old gentleman" cares for his own! and makes them opportunities!

Katey read out as follows—

"MY DEAR COUSIN,

"I'm getting old, and very sick! so if you've nothing to keep you—come, and you'll be welcome! You can bring Katey and her child, for I suppose her husband is still away. Come soon.

"It is Tim Doughty who writes this.

"MARY DWYER."

This was a cousin who lived on a wee farm on the island of Achill (not such as it has been made of late years); it was then but a poor place, with only one or two homesteads on it. Mrs. Dwyer was a cousin by marriage of Nurse O'Birn, and owned one of these small farms.

"Bless us, and save us!" cried Nurse O'Birn. "Sure read that again, Katey." She complied; and then the mother sat pondering. At last she turned round quite fiercely—with such a malignant expression on her face.

"Katey," she said, "we will go! Sure what have we to keep us here? Your John won't be home these three years good, as the ship only sailed a year ago, you know, when you came back to me—"

"Mother, but—"

"Whist, I say, and listen; don't stop me when I'm a telling you. You must not breathe a word to any one, do you hear now? But we'll borrow Mike's car, put up our things, and be off to-morrow morning in the dark, or to-morrow evening perhaps, more likely."

"But, mother, how can we take the bits of furniture?"

"And what need then have we for them? Sure Mary Dwyer has enough and to spare; what would make us bother ourselves with them? No, we'll just put our clothes up, and the childers', and be off the morrow."

"The boy, mother; what shall we do with him? Will the mother of him like your taking him with us so far from Galway?"

"There now, hold your tongue; I knew that you'd bother about something. You'll plaze to leave me alone to manage my own business; and you do as I bid you; go to Mike, and say, Will he lend us the cart to take us—to take us—yes, say to Galway?"

"Why, mother, you said we were going to Achill."

"You're a born fool! Didn't I tell you that no one was to know where we was gone—that's just the thing? No, no, when we gets to Galway, we must go on the car to Castlebar, and then we must walk the rest of the way to Achill, unless we get a lift, until we comes to the boats to take us across—then see if they can find us," added Nurse, with a loud laugh. "Sure don't I remember going there before—just after you was born? I knows the way fast enough."

"I suppose you'll be writing to Mrs. Edward as soon as we get to Achill, mother—for think of the fright she'd be in if she came here, and found us gone"—for Katey had a liking for Grace, whose child she was nursing, and never could understand the dislike her mother evinced for her—therefore she could not help considering Mrs. O'Donnell's feelings in their plan.

"Leave me alone, I say, to manage, and be sure you don't say a word to any one about where we are going. Borrow the horse and cart for Galway. They'll think we're gone to Mrs. Edward's for the day. Go for the cart now, and when its dark we'll pack our things in and be off before daybreak. Nobody need be

the wiser for when we start, as you can put the horse in. Now Katey, acrusla! mind, not a word, or they'll be preventing us going, to have the rent, and I have not enough for that and the journey." She said this to quiet Katey's tongue, for, indeed, she had plenty of money—being paid well for poor little Teddie.

Next morning—strange anomaly that she was—unknown to Katey, she left the amount of the rent on the table, wrapped up in paper, as she knew that her landlord would be the first to open the door, after it was found they did not come back.

I have often observed this in the Irish—although they will be revenged, and their revenge will overcome every feeling of humanity!—causing them to murder in the most cruel way—yet they will be honest!

Untold gold may be under their hands, and without any fear of detection if they took it—yet it is as safe as in the bank! But mind; they are given to pilfering—especially the servants. I think that pilfering is taught them by keeping them always on board wages, even when the family are all domesticated at home. It is the custom; but a custom I do not approve of, and I am sure leads to their stealing food.

CHAPTER XI.

EVERYTHING turned out as arranged, in fact, as Nurse O'Birn said. When they borrowed the cart for the day, it was supposed that it was to go to Mrs. Edward O'Donnell's, so it caused no remark their doing so.

A little *contretemps* awaited them in Galway, as they had to wait two or three hours before the public car for Castlebar started ; and Nurse feared that she might come across some one who knew them, as the morning was well advanced by the time they were to start ; but they were lucky, for they saw no one to recognize them.

It was so late when they reached Castlebar, that had not Nurse been afraid that some one might be coming after her, she would have preferred staying the night there, or have hired a car to take them part of the way on ; but she so feared being traced, that on they trudged, after taking some refreshment at a road-side inn.

Oh, what a weary walk they had across that barren and boggy road, lugging not only the bundle of clothes, but the restless babies each had to carry ! and then, when they could no more, they sat against a stack of bog-turf that

stood by the road-side, or rather in the middle of a field by the road-side, fed the children, and carefully covering the babes with their own shawls, they lay down by them overcome with fatigue, and soon fell asleep.

The sun awoke Nurse O'Birn next morning, and she started up, fearing that she had overslept herself, and that it was later than it really was, for it was but five o'clock. However, they fed the babies, and resumed their walk, reaching their destination opposite Achill about eleven.

There were two or three small boats lying about, and they soon secured one to row across for a few pence. It was only now that Nurse breathed freely, feeling secure from detection. As she landed, she turned to her daughter, saying—

“Now mind, Kitty, you must let Mary Dwyer think both the childers is yours.”

“Both mine! And why, sure?”

“Never you mind. I have my reasons. I'll tell you later; but now mind what I say.”

I need not detail their welcome, nor Mary Dwyer's joke at Katey's twins, so unlike each other, and yet both boys; but look a little into Nurse O'Birn's thoughts and intentions, now that she had succeeded in her undertaking of going off with little Teddie.

She did not very clearly define to herself what she meant to do as regarded Teddie. She knew that she wanted to keep him longer with her, partly out of love for the child, and partly to be revenged and to thwart the mother.

To be revenged for *fancied* affronts ; for, except on the occasion we have mentioned during her husband's illness, Grace had never had a word with Nurse that could have annoyed the fiery-tempered woman ; but that *was* the offence which could not be forgiven ! "The wisp of a girl," as she rudely designated Grace, "made her own boy turn agin her, for he sided with her, and told nurse that his wife did not want her help just then ; and she, who had reared him until he was ten years, the motherless lad as he was, and then she had to give him up to a girl who had brought him niver a penny when he married her !"

Nurse never meant to keep the boy always from his mother. No, indeed ! When she thought it time to give up the care of him, why then she would ; but she would not be said by "a wisp of a girl" what was or what was not the right time ; not she, indeed !

And then she persuaded herself that it was much better for the boy himself to remain in the country than to go into Galway, which

every one knew was not a healthy place. Nurse could not help chuckling at the idea of the fright she was giving Mrs. Edward when she found them gone off.

"Serve her right, the silly fool ; as if I could not care for him wherever he was."

You would think that she would care for the payment she received with the child ; but really she did not want money now, and she had plenty of her previous savings. You see that she was at no expense for board or lodging ; she and Katey did the work of the house between them ; minded the pigs and the fowls, or whatever was to be attended to ; and her cousin was thankful to have them there to work for her in her present bad state of health, "for they kept things straight and tidy, they did."

As to Katey, she more than once returned to the subject of letting Mrs. Edward know where they were ; but each time she touched on the point, her mother got into such a passion, threatening to turn her and her child out if she said anything more, or mentioned the subject to anyone. So at last Katey gave up meddling in the affair at all, though her heart was not easy on the matter ; whenever she was caressing her own boy, she felt sorry for the mother that was deprived of her darling.

On the spur of the moment, one day, she could not help saying, "I wonder, mother, when Mrs. O'Donnell will be coming, or writing for Master Teddie?"

The mother's dark frown warned Katey that she had better not talk on the forbidden subject, when all of a sudden Nurse O'Birn turned to her daughter, and said—

"And how do you know but that it is her own wish that we took the boy away? Sure, if she is after marrying again, she won't want the man to see that she has a child to bring him."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" replied Katey. "Oh, then," kissing her own babe, "I would not have the best man living, who would not have you, too, gramacree! Oh, that's it, is it, Mrs. Edward? I don't like you for it, I can tell you."

And from that moment, all Katey's interest in poor Grace ceased. Her mother, in her cunning, had hit upon the best manner of silencing her. I must leave them now, and return to my poor heroine.

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CHAPTER XII.

GRACE joined the family party as was arranged, and, no delay occurring, they reached in the evening Lock Ina.

This fishing-box Mr. O'Donnell rented from the proprietor of the lake, as had his father before him ; so that it was the custom of the family to spend one or two months there every year. Although they had already paid their annual visit, yet no one made any remark on this second excursion, the season being unusually fine.

The house was very pretty, but very plainly furnished, such as a rural home might be expected to be ; but it was the scenery about it that was so lovely, also the grounds immediately round the house.

Two or three boats were lying in a little cove, where ladies could manage to start them, when inclined to enjoy the exercise of rowing, so that Grace would have enjoyed the *dolce-farniente* sort of life she was expected to lead on this beautiful spot, had she had her Teddie with her, as Mr. O'Donnell had promised she should have.

But the first and second day passed without any mention of baby, which she attributed to

the unsettled state they all felt in. However, when the third day passed without Mr. O'Donnell's alluding to his promise of sending for the child, she determined that next morning, after breakfast, she would broach the subject.

Accordingly, when they stood up after that meal to go and seek their own amusements and occupations until dinner time, as was their wont, Grace said—

“James, you were kind enough to say that Brady should go for Teddie——”

“Oh, dear yes,” said Mr. O'Donnell, interrupting her, and reddening at the thought that he ought to have remembered his promise, and not have required the reminder; “Oh, dear yes, Brady,” turning to the butler, “do you think that you could go to-day?”

“Why, yes sir,” replied the good-natured old man (with whom both Grace and Teddie were especial favourites); “but I should not, may be, be able to be back in good time to-night; for Nurse would, may be, want an hour or two to ready herself and the young gentleman; so if you please, sir, I had better sleep in Galway, and come on to-morrow in good time.” And so it was arranged.

Before Brady left, Grace slipped out to ask him at what hour she might expect him next day.

"Well, mam, I should think about three to four at the soonest. You may be sure that I will bring Master Teddie as soon as possible, as I know that you're wanting to have him."

"Do, Brady; come as quickly as you can. Nurse need not keep you long waiting. I do, indeed, long to have him here."

Grace resolutely set herself some letter writing, which was in arrear, in order not to let the time hang heavily on her hands; she even volunteered to row Mrs. O'Donnell on the lake for an hour or two whilst she fished (for the ladies were as fond of this sport as the men), and so got through the day.

I cannot say that next morning Grace was so successful in passing away the time. She began a dozen things without continuing ten minutes at the same thing, but when three o'clock came, she flung down the book she had in her hand (for she was not really reading it), put on her bonnet and went down to the Cove, taking a glass with her in order to see the boat as soon as it should leave the opposite side of the lake. But four o'clock came, and no sign of the boat. "And yet he said four at the latest," thought Grace as she restlessly walked up and down; "perhaps I misunderstood him; I will run and ask Mary (Mrs. O'Donnell) if

she knows when he is expected ; but perhaps they may come whilst I am away. What shall I do ? Oh ! there you girl, Judy, Judy, come here." Judy, a servant girl who happened to be passing, came to her call.

"Just go in Judy, like a good girl, and ask Mrs. O'Donnell if she knows when Brady is expected ?"

Mrs. O'Donnell came out to answer herself Grace's inquiry. "You are thinking the time very long, Gracey, before Teddie comes ; but never fear, they must soon be here, though, to tell you the truth, I do not know at what time James expects Brady home ; but surely that is the boat ?"

"Where, where ?" cried Grace ; "oh ! do you mean that one ?" following with her glass the direction in which Mrs. O'Donnell was pointing. "Oh ! no, that is James ; they must come opposite to where we are standing."

"Ah ! yes, I was mistaken, for now I see that that is James, and he is rowing towards us. I suppose he sees us, so he will be able to tell you all about Brady."

"I thought," said Grace, with a disappointed tone, "that Brady told me three or four at the latest—it is now nearly five."

James, in reply to the query, eagerly put to

him by both ladies, said—"That he had not fixed any hour; but as Brady had spoken about not keeping Teddie out too late on the previous day, it was odd that he had not arrived before this; but you know that Brady is so safe and steady, not to speak of nurse, that it will be all right depend on it." And to make Grace laugh, he added:—"How do you know but that Brady and nurse may have waited to be married, before they were so indiscreet as to travel together; he such a smart bachelor of seventy-five; and she a widdle! always dangerous individuals."

"You must have your joke, James," replied Grace; "nevertheless, I am uneasy."

However they went into dinner, or rather supper. No Teddie, even after they had left the supper table; nay, they had to go to bed without any news.

You may be sure that Grace did not sleep well; and yet she thought herself unreasonable, because what harm could come to the boy, with such steady servants as were Brady and Nurse O'Birn.

Once she started up in bed,—the thought of the French had come to frighten her. "Oh! perhaps they had all been taken prisoners;" and yet she soon laughed at herself for such an

idea.—“What would they want with an old man, an old woman and baby? Besides, James had been talking at supper-time about the French, and had said that as yet nothing had been heard of them; so, indeed, she was silly to let such a thought enter her head.”

She lay down again, but not to sleep. She found *that* was impossible after the foolish fright she had given herself, and which had completely roused her.

CHAPTER XIII.

GRACE was very glad when it was light enough to get up and dress, and to go out into the fresh air after her restless and anxious night. She waited about until called into breakfast, and yet no boat was in sight! However, they had not concluded that meal, before one of the maids rushed in with—“Please, sir, the boat has just come in sight.”

Grace was on her feet directly; when the maid went up to her and said: “Please, mum, Brady seems to be alone!”

“Oh, no, that cannot be; nurse and baby must be with him! so, perhaps, it is not Brady,” said Mrs. O'Donnell.

"You wait here, Grace; and I will go and see who it is," said Mr. O'Donnell.

Poor thing, she sat down, feeling ready to cry; and certainly not liking to disobey her brother-in-law.

He was absent a good quarter of an hour, and when he returned, looked anxious and worried. Grace started up, saying—

"Oh! James, I see that something has happened to Teddie!"

"Well, Gracey, something *is* wrong; but I cannot explain it, so Brady, you had better tell Mrs. Edward all about it; it will be best that she should know all that you can tell—begin!"

"Well, mam; when I had seen to what the master gave me commission to do in Galway—which was as quiet as could be!"—

"Never mind about Galway," put in Mr. O'Donnell, "go straight to the point; don't you see the state she's in? the poor thing!"

"Well, sir; I will then. When I had done all as I had to do in Galway—"

"My dear James," said his wife; "why cannot you let him tell it his own way, instead of interrupting him?" (This was said in answer to a gesture of impatience on Mr. O'Donnell's part.)

"Well, Mary, I believe you're right; so get

on, Brady, only be as short about it as you can."

"Well, mam, where was I? Oh! leaving Galway. Well, as I said, I took a car, thinking, maybe, to save time, rather than walk the short distance, which another time I should not have minded, being a good walker—saving your presence, ladies; and then it was best for bringing nurse and Master Teddie back in good time; but, otherwise, I could have carried Master Teddie all the way, and glad to do it—bless him and save him this day, wherever he is!"

Grace became paler, and started as she heard this last word; but was so anxious to hear the end, that wisely, she made no remark.

"Well, when I arrived at Seeley's Lane, as the village is called, you know, mam, I asked at the first house, your ladyship knows," (Brady always ladyshipped them when he was nervous) "there are about eight or ten near each other, but at least they are not close together, but only a stone's throw apart: 'Well,' I said says I, 'which is the Widdie O'Birn's cottage?' says I, to a bit of a girl who stood at the door of the nearest house.

"'Do you see that one, with a bit of a garden before it?' says she.

"'Why then, I do,' says I—"

"Oh! Brady, do go on," put in poor Grace; her patience sorely tried.

"Yes, mam, I will; for sure, you must be so anxious to hear all about the end! at least, not that I know the end; but, please let me tell you all I did?"

"Yes, Brady! yes please," ejaculated the poor mother.

"Well, then, mam, milady; I went up to the door, but it was shut—shut fast; I shook it, but sorrow a person came. I knocked at the window—a liberty, considering Master Teddie lived there, that I did not like to take, it went against me to do it; but, saving your presence, I did do it: no more answer than if the *dead* lived there. So I said out loud, through the key hole, 'if you're all asleep or dead'—"

"Dead, did you say?" asked Grace.

"No, no; I did not say that they was dead; I said only, that they was as silent as the dead!"

Grace breathed again.

"'Well, then,' says I to myself, says I, 'I had better go to the next house, and ask what it means.' So I says to the man whose name I found was Mike Doolan (and how I knew that was because it was written over the door, it being the post-office; and I suppose they put it

up there so that you may get redress if you don't get your letters in proper time)—”

“Never mind that, Brady, do go on!”

“Yes, mam. ‘Well,’ says this man—a very civil-spoken man, indeed—‘well, then, sir, I can’t tell you where they’s gone to; they borrowed my cart, they did, two or three nights ago; and, before anyone was stirring in the morning, they was gone; but my cart was sent back next morning all right.’

“‘And have they not been home since, nor sent a messenger?’ says I. ‘No, sir,’ says he; ‘and, what’s more, I don’t think they is coming; for the house is mine, you see; they rinted it from me.’

“‘And a very nice little house it is, sir,’ says I; ‘and makes a neat little property,’ says I. ‘You may say that,’ says he; ‘but why I thinks they are not coming back is this—’

“‘You’re right, sir,’ says I, ‘to come to the point; for that’s what I came to you to hear, and am wanting to hear when they will return.’

“‘Sir,’ says he, ‘they will not return, I was going to tell you; for when I made sure of it in my own mind, I just thought I’d go and see that all was right in the house. I won’t be against owning to you, sir, that I felt a little bit squeamish about the rint that was due; so, as

I said, the door being unlocked, only latched, I walked in. I tell you this in confidence ; but I should not like anyone else to know that Mike Doolan would go into anybody's house, and he not asked in. I trust you, because you look a real gentleman, and have come a distance, as I see by your looks, seeing I don't know you, and I thinks I does know every man, woman, and child—'

" 'But, sir,' says I, 'if 'm not a gentleman, I belongs to a real gentleman ; but please to tell me what you did see when you opened the door.' For, likes yourself, dear milady, I was impatient to hear what it was he saw, and I was frightened to think what he did see."

" 'Well, sir,' says he, 'you need not look so scared, for it was a good find for me. It was a paper on the table ; and I took it up, and just opened it ; for sure, I said, I have the right, it being my own house. Well, to be sure, I was surprised and glad, for it was the rint that was owing, and up to the end of the week, too, which was handsome of Widow O'Birn, and I shall always speak well of her for it ; not but that it would have been more neighbourly, and I living next door, and lending my cart and horse to her, to have bid me good morrow. But I suppose she had her reasons, sir,' says he.

“ ‘ And, sir,’ says I, ‘ can you tell me her reasons ?’

“ ‘ No, then, I can’t ; otherwise I would have the greatest pleasure in life to tell you them if I could, just to ease your mind, for I see that you takes on about it. But, you see, she never opened her mind to me, never at all at all. She was a close woman, was Widow O’Birn, and mostly kept dark—’

“ ‘ Well,’ I says, ‘ for the matter of that—’ ”

“ Oh, Brady, do tell me what you did next !” said Grace.

“ Why, I said to him that I had better go away ; there was no use staying longer ; but that I’d come back next day, and perhaps he’d be kind enough to be on the look out for her. And that was the reason that I did not come home yesterday, mam.”

“ But did you do nothing in Galway to try and trace them ?” broke in Mr. O’Donnell, who during this tedious conversation was impatiently walking up and down, with great difficulty preventing himself from reproving the old man’s garrulity. However, each time his patience was going to break down, he saw his wife’s warning finger reminding him that he would do more harm than good if he interrupted the story.

“Well, then, I did, sir, what little I could. When I went back to Galway I took the liberty, mam, of going to your house, and as no one answered the knock, I went to the next door house, and asked was there no one of the family of Mrs. Edward O'Donnell in the way? and, says I, would you kindly tell me, and I'll be obliged to you, if the nurse and baby—the same being Master Edward—I did not like to say Master Teddie to one who had nothing to do with the family—so I said Master Edward. Didn't I do well, mam?”

“Quite right, Brady, and what then?”

“‘Please can you tell me,’ says I, ‘has Master Edward been here yesterday or to-day?’ ‘No,’ says she, ‘I am sure he's not. No one has been since Mrs. Edward went away in the carriage that came for her, and that was Mr. James O'Donnell's, of Waterdale, who is her brother-in-law—brother to the poor gentleman as died,’ says she.

“I did not let on at first who I was, to hear what she'd say, you see, mam, to get more out of her if it was in her, and I asked her, ‘Could nurse have come and you was not looking?’

“‘No, indeed, then, for the truth is I'm always looking, and should have heard the knock.’ So I says to her at last, says I, ‘Did

you happen to see her about the town? But maybe you don't know her when you see her?' says I, at a venture.

"‘I begs your pardon,’ says she, ‘but I do. Isn't it herself that always brings in the baby, the darling, for me to see how it grows, she does.’

"So, mam, that was all I could find out from her; but I went then to all the places that lets out cars, but no one could tell anything. So, then, I went back to Seeley's Lane; but I need not have gone, for saving your presence, neither inside nor outside, neither top nor bottom of her had been seen. Then I thanked Mr. Rooney, the civil boy, for he would have told me if he knew himself; and he was sorry for my disappointment. So then I thought that I had better come back and let the master and you know, though it is sorry this day, I am, that I have to bring you this news; and I'd rather bite out my tongue than tell it to you mam."

"Well, Brady," said the master, "you have done your best—go and get some breakfast; and then I'll send for you when I have decided what had best be done; however you had better not say anything to anyone else."

"You're right your honour. It is best to keep our troubles to ourselves; but it is right

that our joys should be shared, for we should be poor mean things to begrudge dividing them ; there are so few to be got in this world." Saying this to the great relief of the unhappy trio, he went away shutting the door.

CHAPTER XIV.

At last the poor mother spoke ; " James, what does it mean ? "

" I really am at a loss to know ; but after all, dear girl, we are distressing ourselves unnecessarily. She may have gone to see some relative, taking advantage of your leaving home to do so."

" But, then, I told her that in a day or two we should send for her and Teddie ; and that she was to be quite ready to start."

" That makes it strange that she should go out. Then she may have fancied that a day or two was rather vague ; and that she should have time to spare to pay her visit, and be back before you wanted her."

" True ; but," remarked Mrs. O'Donnell, " why need she have left the rent, and then too, to have taken all their clothes away ? "

" That is puzzling," answered her husband ;

"but give me a little time to think about it ;" and he began to walk up and down the room.

Do tell me, reader, why do we seek wisdom by walking up and down ? especially, why does man do so, as a help to lure the coy maiden Wisdom to his assistance ? If a man is sitting when he is presented with some puzzling enigma to solve, he rises immediately and begins that pacing up and down ; and the more masculine a woman is, or, rather, I ought to have said, the stronger-minded a woman is, the more is she inclined to that help in deciding difficulties. I often wonder how it can help ; and, oh ! if it is a momentous question that is being decided, I can hardly bear it ; the restlessness unnerves me ; but if the shoes creak, too, I am obliged to rush away.

But Grace was too stupified to mind even the creaking of shoes, or, indeed, any noise. The varying expression of Mr. O'Donnell's face was watched eagerly by his wife, who knew the conflict that was going on his mind ; and she waited patiently, as was her wont on like occasions, until her husband should speak, knowing that when he did he would have made up his mind as to what was best to be done, and she had full reliance on his wisdom. So she went round quietly to where Grace sat,

and placing herself by her side, drew her poor face down on to her shoulder, and whispered to her—

“Don’t disturb him, dear ; he will sure to decide what is best.”

Grace turned her aching eyes upon Mary’s kind face, but did not speak.

CHAPTER XV.

OH! if women would but know how to hold their peace when they have asked advice, and learn to wait until the person they have appealed to has well considered the pros and cons of the difficulty that has been placed before them, instead of breaking the chain of thought by telling “what they think,” “what they would do,” &c. Surely, they have not come to say what they think, when they ostensibly have come to seek to know what you, their friends and advisers, think! I know that often all the talkativeness arises from nervousness and excitement ; but oh! it is a good lesson to learn, namely, that of *how* to ask advice, and *how* to wait patiently until it is given.

“At length Mr. O’Donnell said—“ Grace, do you know where any of nurse’s relations live?

for it seems to me that the best thing I can do is at once to seek them out, and perhaps find her with them.

"I do know that one sister lives close to Lock Corrib, and that is the only one I ever heard of, however I have also heard that they were not friends."

"Never mind, they might have made up, so I will go there directly."

"Oh, let me go with you! Indeed, indeed! I could not remain quietly here, doing nothing—"

"But Grace, I could go much quicker without you."

"James, I cannot remain here; I must be doing something."

"James," said his wife, "she is right; it would be better that she should go with you; nay, I must not be left behind, so we will all go. Cheer up, dear Gracey; we may find that we are disturbing ourselves for nothing, for to be reasonable, where can she have gone but to her relations? and why should she have gone away with any bad motive? There is little sense in frightening ourselves in this way; however, come, we will start at once."

An hour after their determination they started for Lock Corrib, but after making out Mrs. Flynn's abode, they found that she knew

nothing about her sister, Mrs. O'Birn. Indeed, she was half offended to be asked about her.

"What should she know about Judy O'Birn? Sure she was no real sister to her! and what did they want her for?"

To the query—"Did she know anywhere that she might have gone, some relations or friends where she might be staying?"—"How should she know, since she had not clapped eyes upon Judy O'Birn come Christmas five years; and sure the last time they had met, was it not herself who had called her Mary Flynn all to pieces, and was she likely to let her come near her again? Not she, indeed; nor did she want her, indeed!"

"Well, we cannot remain to listen to your story now, Mrs. Flynn; but if you should by chance hear through any friend anything about your sister, please to send a message to me—'Mr. O'Donnell, of Waterdale Park, Sligo.'"

"Sure, an I will, sir, to be sure; but its little likely that I am to know anything about her or her belongings, bad luck to her!"

They went down to Seeley's Lane, only to hear the same as Brady had heard, and no more. Then they returned to Galway, and went to the magistrate, and asked his advice. He could only advise their having placards posted on the

walls, offering a reward for learning the whereabouts of Julia O'Birn, late of Seeley's Lane ; and also recommended their distributing handbills about the town and the neighbourhood, in hopes that they might fall into the hands of some of her friends, who probably would come forward and give information.

"I must go to my own home, James, come what may ; for I must be on the spot ; and where, if she ever comes back, she will be sure to find me. I could not return to Ina."

"But we cannot leave you alone, my dear girl ;" and the good brother-in-law looked perplexed.

"I am sure that it would be better for me to be alone, James. I will send for Maruth, my servant, and will wait here as patiently as I can until nurse thinks proper to bring back my darling ; but I shall discharge her instantly, for daring to play me such a trick as to take Teddie anywhere without my leave."

"That will be quite right ; for it is outrageous," said Mary, "to presume to take such a liberty ; especially as you told her to be ready whenever you sent for her."

"I did do so ; and now dear friends, if you would drive me to Maruth's mother's I could tell her to go at once to my house ; and you

will go back with me and take some refreshment as soon as she can get it ready."

"No, I will tell you what we will do; we shall have to sleep at the hotel to-night, as it will be too late to get down to Ina. So we will all go and dine there whilst your girl gets ready for you, and we will take you home in time for bed. But let us all try to take a cheerful view of the case. It is, doubtless, an insolent thing of her to take Teddie anywhere without leave; but you must remember, these foster-mothers do take a great deal on themselves, and fancy that they have as great a right to their foster-children as the children's own parents."

"Besides," added Grace, "Nurse O'Birn is particularly unpleasant and presuming; she always treated me as if I was too young to be able to give a word of advice about baby."

"Well, do as I say—discharge her at once, and take the care of your child into your own hands."

CHAPTER XVI.

DAY after day passed, and no tidings, no clue, found to Nurse O'Birn's whereabouts. Poor

Grace went almost every day down to Seeley's Lane. The house remained as it had been left; and, as Mike Doolan said, "as she has left her bits of furniture in the house, you see, mam, I don't know what to do; and faith, no one seems to want the house."

A month passed away! You may be sure that during that time the O'Donnells had been in more than once to see Grace; and frequent messages had passed between the families.

Everything and everybody had now resumed their usual state, for Hoche's expedition had been scattered to the winds by a storm. It is a curious coincidence, that the French Legion, coming to liberate Ireland from the English, their oppressors, was destroyed by a storm, and in like manner the Spanish Armada.

However, like many others, the O'Donnells had returned to their own home; for now all fear was allayed for the timid; and the most sanguine gave up the hope for the time being of liberating their country by the aid of French arms.

One day, about five weeks after Grace had returned home, she received an early visit from her relatives the O'Donnells. They had on a previous occasion called on the magistrate, to ask his advice as to what they had better do,

now that so long a time had passed without making any advance in their search for the child. He had none to give. There were no detectives in those days. There were what were called Bow-street officers; but he did not think that they would be of much use. No, he did not think that any more could be done;—that time alone could unravel the mystery.

“Now, Mary,” said Mr. O'Donnell, “I shall tell Grace what has been in my mind from the first; and that is, that the boy is dead, and the woman has gone off to hide, not daring to tell the poor mother.”

“I should not wonder,” replied his wife. “At any rate, it would do no harm to suggest it to Grace; for how dreadfully this suspense is telling on her! She does look terribly worn and ill, and I have no doubt will become so if this state of things continues. Yes, it would be happier even for her to know the child is dead, than to go on expecting it every day, to be each day disappointed. Her servant-girl tells me that she often hears her in the night getting up and pacing the room, sighing and moaning, for she has not shed a tear all this time.”

“Well, then, I will suggest this new idea at once, and see what effect it will have, Mary.”

Carrying out this plan as soon as the first

greetings were over, Mr. O'Donnell told Grace of their visit to the magistrate, and of his inability to offer any further advice or suggestion.

"But now, my dear Grace, I will tell you what was my idea from the first. I really believe that poor Teddie had some sudden attack which—which—well, which killed him; or some accident, most likely: and she hadn't the courage to see you and tell you; and so went off, perhaps to England, or elsewhere, where you cannot find her."

"I thought of that myself, James," said the dry, bloodless lips of the poor sufferer; "and I inquired of the neighbours if they had heard anything to make them guess that. No, they hadn't; they had seen both the children playing about the day before they missed them. But it may be that something happened in the night."

"They borrowed the cart the day before," said Mary; "so it was not such a sudden determination to leave as it would have been had anything happened in the night."

"I have a fancy," said Grace, "to go and examine the house. I suppose that I could do so, if the landlord gave me leave, eh, James?"

"Of course you could: and should you like me

to go and do so for you? we might find some clue to where she is. I wonder that it never struck any of us before."

"No, James, thank you; I must go myself, to be satisfied."

"Well, that I can understand. Is there time this afternoon?"

"Plenty," replied Grace, "if your horses are not tired."

"Why, of course they are not. I will step to the hotel, and bring the carriage round; so, go and get ready."

CHAPTER XVII.

THEY got the key from Mike Doolan, and went into the house. Everything was tidy, though, of course, covered with dust, showing how long since anyone had been there.

They opened every little cupboard—examined every nook and corner. No scrap of paper which Grace had hoped she might find, had been left behind, to give some indication of where they had gone. She went up alone to the little room which was used as a sleeping apartment; and there were the beds. There was a child's chair, which Grace had sent for

Teddie, to sit up to the table in ; and in one corner, as if forgotten, an old pair of tiny shoes, that she knew were his. Her heart, as it were, stood still ; and, what no words had been able to effect, the sight of those tiny shoes did ; they opened the floodgates of her sorrow. She wailed and wept in a passion of grief ; and Mrs. O'Donnell, who flew up the stairs at the sound, found her prostrate on one of the beds, holding these precious relics in her hands—these memorials of her lost child.

Wisely, her sister-in-law did not, by word or question, interfere to stop these saving tears, but patiently waited until they had exhausted themselves ; then she gently besought Grace to come away with her. The poor creature let herself be led away, but she hardly had strength to go down the stairs, and Mr. O'Donnell had almost to carry her to the carriage.

Mrs. O'Donnell made her go to bed as soon as she reached home ; nor did she oppose the advice. She was utterly prostrate. The violence of her grief, coming on the previous tension of nerves for so many weeks, seemed to have entirely taken away all strength. However, very soon Mary had the comfort of seeing her fall into a profound slumber—the first good sleep since her trouble.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"OH!" cried Mrs. O'Donnell, to her husband, when she stole out of Grace's room to tell him the good news. "Blest tears! thrice blessed tears! Blessed, when through sorrow for sin they wash away guilt, and restore the sinner to virtue! Blessed, when they ease the breaking heart! Blessed, when they soften the obdurate heart to pity for the woes of others! And again blessed when they restore estranged, though loving hearts! And lastly, blessed when the mourner finds their solace at the grave of the lost one! Oh, James, her tears at sight of those little relics of the lost boy, have, I verily believe, saved the reason of that poor suffering mother!"

And so they truly had. Her sister-in-law remained in the room watching Grace, and was inexpressibly relieved to find that she slept all through the night until eight next morning, and that she woke up, if sad, yet quiet and resigned, and perfectly convinced that her brother-in-law was right, that her child was dead.

And was he lost to her? Ah, no! any bereaved mother will tell you that her dead child seems

more especially hers when the grave has closed over it than it was before.

It seems always with her—she can talk to it, and fancy it is watching ; and, as it were, participating in all her feelings, much more so than it ever did in life.

It seems more essentially hers ; no one can go between them ; no one can draw the little one's heart away from her. No, no ; a dead child belongs by right to the mother. Who cares for it now as she does ? Who remembers it as she does ? Does she ever put it aside from the family circle ? No, it is always counted as there. And though she knows that in praying for her children she need not, must not, pray in the same manner for it as she does for the living, yet, is it excluded from her prayers ? Ah, no ; although, if by their tender years, she feels sure that they are before the throne of God, then she asks them to remember her, rather than pray for them. And if they were of longer stay in this world that she feared the stain of earth might not have quite been washed away—ah ! then she can still mingle them in her prayers, when praying to the Heavenly Father for mercy and salvation for those dear ones still left to her care.

Mrs. O'Donnell would not again leave Grace,

but made her go with her back to Waterdale, when she had sufficiently recovered to bear the change.

Though week after week passed, until they began to count the months instead of weeks, yet not the slightest clue could be obtained of Mrs. O'Birn or her daughter.

And now they persuaded Grace to give up her house in Galway and live with them; for so young as she was, and with no family, it was by far the wisest plan.

About seven months after Grace had removed to Waterdale she heard from her aunt, with whom Mrs. O'Malley resided, in Dublin, that her mother's health was beginning to decline; and Grace was not long ere she was roused from her abiding sorrow by a summons from her aunt, to come without delay, for her mother had had a stroke of paralysis.

CHAPTER XIX.

Now began quite a new phase in our heroine's life, which I must proceed to describe.

I do not fancy that you feel very interested in Mrs. O'Malley more than I confess I do, so you will not want me to enter greatly into the details of her illness, and that it will be sufficient to say that after five or six weeks of dutiful and affectionate nursing, Grace saw the grave close over the only near relation she had. And although there had never been warm sympathy between mother and daughter—still Mrs. O'Malley had loved her daughter as warmly as a nature like hers could love ; and during her last illness, had shown that she appreciated the attention shown her by her dutiful child, to whom she left the small property belonging to her. So that, with what Grace inherited from her husband, gave her a genteel competence.

Mrs. O'Shawnessy, the sister with whom Mrs. O'Malley had resided, was the widow of a lawyer. She had been early left a widow with a son and two daughters, and her husband dying young, had been unable to leave much property behind, so that her means were very straightened.

At the time we are introducing her to you, her son had become, what was called in those days a counsellor, or as we should say now-a-days, a barrister, or Queen's counsel. He

lived with his mother and sisters, to add to their income.

Grace could not help seeing and knowing that her mother's death was a great loss to her aunt; and, therefore, as she had no particular tie to Galway, she offered, if agreeable, to remain with her aunt in Neville Square.

Mrs. O'Shawnessy was but too thankful to refuse her offer; so Grace made Dublin her home for three or four years, occasionally going to Waterdale for a few weeks every summer.

You may be sure that she never visited Galway without making what we may call a pilgrimage to Seeley Lane, but without obtaining the least piece of intelligence of Widow O'Birn.

The O'Donnells spent a month or five weeks in Dublin every year, as was the habit with most country families of distinction to do; therefore Grace saw a great deal of her kind and affectionate brother and sister-in-law, to whom she was very dear.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT a difference in Grace's life was the excitement and bustle of Dublin. Still young enough to enjoy gaiety, and although trials of no common nature, and deep sorrow, had shaded her early life, she was young enough still to retain in a great degree her naturally buoyant spirits.

Her aunt, on account of her daughters, saw a great deal of society ; and her cousin Counsellor O'Shawnessy's professional connection, introduced to his mother's house many of the choice spirits of the day—a day which was very rich in clever, witty, and rising men, such as Gratton, Phillips, Horne Tooke, and Curran. This was a particularly brilliant epoch of the Dublin bar, such as has never been seen since, at least, in so large a proportion ; in fact, there may be now-a-days, here and there, a clever man ; but where is the wit that deserves handing down as did the spontaneous effusions of the men of those days ? Where the eloquence that enchained men, and made an audience weep, as did Phillips when addressing the court on some domestic tragedy he had to plead the cause of ? Where the preacher, such as Kirwen (though a pervert from the faith of his baptism),

who was so eloquent in his pleadings for charity, as to cause the ladies to take off their ornaments, and place them in the plates as they were carried round for subscriptions; not satisfied with the amount they had brought as their contribution to the charity which he was advocating, but so wrought upon by his burning words, that again and again fresh contributions were deposited until the very rings were taken off their fingers, in the excitement and enthusiasm he excited?

Is it that we do not possess such talented men now-a-days? Or have we, who listen to them, become colder or too practical to be moved to forego our prudence? I rather think that it is that we are at a duller time; for real wit, real eloquence, real talent, must make itself felt—must move even a nineteenth century society; nor do I believe that we have lost our enthusiasm for sterling talent.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was in such society that Grace found herself; it drew out all her dormant cleverness, and she thoroughly enjoyed it. She was not unappreciated, herself, for her ready repartee; her

beauty was a great element of success, even among such a set; and she was called everywhere "The Beauty." "Have you seen the Beauty to-day?" was a common question put from one to the other, or "What will the Beauty say to that?" &c. (The Irish are so fond of nicknames).

Grace had several offers of marriage, but she appeared insensible to all who approached her; however Fate was advancing with rapid strides, though she guessed it not, and thought herself secure.

One day Counsellor O'Shawnessy, at the breakfast table, begged his mother to expect to dinner Lieutenant Robert Noel. He has come over in the guardship. "I met him yesterday at Walker's, and invited him to dine with me to-day. I hope there is nothing to prevent his coming?"

"Nothing, John, that I know of," replied his mother.

"Then four o'clock, mother. Good-bye till then; but girls put on your best bibs and tuckers to atonish the Englisher.

"Oh! you may be sure of that," said his sister Eliza, the younger of the two sisters; "but what is he like?"

"Oh! you must judge for yourself; so good-bye to you all." And he was gone.

Of course they discussed the subject, and Mary O'Shawnessy exclaimed, "But what is the use of our thinking of, or caring to look our best? what will it signify how we look? whilst cousin Grace is by we are never noticed."

"That is all nonsense," interrupted Grace. "However make your minds easy on this point, for I never would have anything to say to an Englishman, if he was hung all over with diamonds."

"Oh, then, I would have something to say to him," said Eliza; "for I should like to pluck off a few of the diamonds."

"Well, not I," said Grace, "for I am sure the diamonds would be dull, and not sparkling enough for me. So, now you know that you have the field to yourself as far as I am concerned, make the best use of your opportunity."

"You are disposing of this good man very quietly, girls," said the mother. "I beg to remind you that you have not heard whether he is married or single, old or young; but which of you will come out with me this morning?"

"I will," said Eliza; "for I have a little shopping to do on my own account."

"Ah!" laughed Grace, "to buy a hook to secure some of the diamonds; eh, Eliza?"

And so they parted, and each went to their several occupations, until the quarter before dinner hour reminded them, it was time to prepare to go down to meet the expected guest.

CHAPTER XXII.

At five minutes before four, Lieutenant Noel and another friend of John O'Shawnessy's entered the drawing-room.

In those days they had not the insane fashion when asked for one hour, to arrive an hour, or perhaps two later, as they do now-a-days.

Then, punctuality was considered a sign of good breeding, not a *gaucherie*, as it is at the present day. There are not even any old-fashioned people left on this side of the century, who, by their punctuality, throw the whole household where they are invited, into hysterics by coming to the time named on the card of invitation.

Now, even cooks never think of being ready for quite an hour after the time mentioned, to

save their reputations and to ensure the dinner being served hot.

Well, I have left Mr. Noel and Mr. O'Shawnessy waiting in the drawing-room with their hostess, whilst I was tirading against present fashion, in contradistinction with the old, making it evident that I prefer the latter to the former. Excuse me, reader, and I will now return and introduce them to the young ladies, who, accompanied by Grace, entered the room a few minutes after the gentlemen arrived.

Mr. O'Shawnessy was an old friend, so we need say little about him, but that he was not only an old friend, but a general favourite. Mr. Noel is the one they were curious to see, as the stranger.

Mr. Noel was tall and very good looking; nay, even very handsome.

His uniform became him; he wore it on this occasion, for it was not as now, the custom to be *en mufti*; officers of all kinds, when with their ship or regiment (that is, in the same place with it), wore their uniforms. Mr. Noel was dark, with plenty of colour, and a profusion of black hair.

Of course his manner appeared stiff in contrast to the Irish *sang froid*, but then it was hardly a fair test what his manner might be on

ordinary occasions, for who does not feel it a trial, that ordeal before dinner is announced? more especially when all the party except your host or hostess are strangers to you.

At last the happy summons is given, Mrs. O'Shawnessy was of course led in to dinner by the stranger, and soon the congenial habit of taking wine together broke the ice, and made conversation become general. What a pity that this custom is exploded. It made people at a dinner-table much more friendly than they are at present. I know that, often under the old *regime*, it brought some disagreeables and affronts; if a poor man omitted inviting any one he ought to have honoured to "the pleasure of a glass of wine, Mr. or Mrs.—"what a mistake! But then, on the other hand, it often made up a coolness, that had but wanted something as trifling as this to make it all right again.

During the evening the ladies, in turns, amused their visitors, by singing their old Irish songs (the melodies had not then come into vogue). Grace had a peculiarly sweet voice—quite uncultivated, but in its rich soft tones admirably adapted to the melancholy and touching songs of her native land.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF course, our Englishman was struck with—taken desperately captive—by our heroine! perfectly astonished at the beautiful and graceful girl who entered the room, accompanied by two plain, though good-natured looking girls. We are apt when we know one or two members of a family, to expect the rest to be like them! It is this preconceived idea that caused Mr. Noel's surprise at Grace's beauty—for both Mrs. O'Shawnessy and her son were remarkably plain, almost ugly.

Nor could he quite understand when his hostess said, "Allow me to introduce you to my niece, Mrs. O'Donnell;" he supposed that he had misunderstood Mrs. for Miss; for surely she seemed too young to be a married woman—so girlish as she looked; however, when he had convinced himself that he had not heard wrongly, and that it was indeed Mrs. O'Donnell, how grieved he was! As he sat after dinner listening to her sweet voice, and pathetic rendering of those old ballads, which she *felt* as well as sung—the thought that so fascinating a woman was already appropriated, was unfortunate—for, indeed, he knew that he had never

before admired anyone as he did the woman before him!—he left the house wishing that he had not accepted the invitation of his new friend.

On paying a visit, a day or two afterwards, in Neville Square, Mr. Noel found the elder lady alone. The younger ladies were out. So he ventured to remark on the youthful appearance of Mrs. O'Donnell—of course adroitly bringing in the subject—and heard with delight that she was a widowed niece who always resided with her aunt.

Now, did Mr. Noel give way to his smothered feeling of admiration, as he walked away from the square. Now, did he mentally promise himself, "*I will win her.*" Now, did he begin to lay his plans for the siege—and with the old fashioned hospitality of Dublin (now, alas! gone the way of all good things) it was not a difficult matter to arrange.

Mrs. O'Shawnessy had said to him, "I shall always be happy to see you, Mr. Noel, when you feel inclined to drop in of an evening;" and he resolved that he would put her sincerity to the test.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A COUPLE of mornings after his first visit, he began the attack by bringing four tickets for a ball, which was to take place at the Rotundo. Mrs. O'Shawnessy received them with thanks ; but what was his disappointment in the evening to see the O'Shawnessys at the ball, and no Grace with them ! He had stationed himself in the doorway to meet *her*—and had to give his arm to the old lady instead ! As soon as he could, without appearing particular, he inquired for Mrs. O'Donnell.

“O, my cousin ? Well, she seldom came to balls. Only had done so once or twice since she had lived with them—and then only to oblige mamma.” So, poor fellow, he had to do the amiable to Eliza and Mary as well as he could, as also to take the old lady into supper ; but vowing to himself that he should know better than get ball tickets again.

Another day he arrived at Neville Square with some bunches of violets ; and with a very marked manner, chose out the most beautiful one for Grace—and presented it in such a manner as to cause her cheeks to be suffused with blushes, which made her determined to punish him for his audacity.

So she smelt them, and quietly laying them down, said, "The odour is rather overpowering, and better at a distance," pushing the flowers far from her.

They met one morning at the Rotunda to see some pictures. As soon as the O'Shawnessy party entered the room he joined them, and very adroitly allowed the old lady and Mary to go on, and as soon as he got the opportunity, offered his arms to Grace and Eliza. They could not politely refuse to take them, and he thought "Now, madam, I have secured you for a little while at last;" but Grace found an excuse to drop his arm almost as she took it. Seeing a party she knew at the other end of the room, she bowed to him, and darted off to secure a seat near them, leaving Mr. Noel horribly annoyed at having to gallant Eliza O'Shawnessy about until they met her mother and sister, when he politely got chairs for them to sit at their ease and inspect the pictures, and then he bowed and left them.

Was he not in a rage with Grace! But she greatly enjoyed the *tour* she had played him—for she was resolute in her determination not to like the Englishman, and also to show him her dislike.

They had several encounters like this, for he

was as resolute in showing her how very much he admired, even loved her. So he came to their house very often; and oftener met them—shall I say accidentally? Well, no; for you would not believe me if I did.

This perhaps was the very best plan to win her, for the fact of thinking over these little encounters, amusing herself at the remembrance of how she had foiled him, of how vexed he had looked, &c., made her think very much about him. Nor could she hide from herself his very unmistakeable glances of admiration, which, she poutingly said half aloud to herself, that he had no right to indulge in; but common sense would reply, "And why not, if he is foolish enough to admire me, as long as he says nothing?"

As I said, Grace found that she was thinking a great deal more of the handsome stranger than she liked to own.

What need to go through the different phases that both their minds assumed? Sometimes he was indignant at her evident rejection of his advances, and thought that he would give up the pursuit of a woman who was either very heartless or coquettish. And then, at any apparent change or show of indifference on his part, Grace would rouse up in her real liking

for him, and think, "It is well I took no notice of his looks or fine speeches, for you see they meant nothing. The English never do care for us Irish. He was only flirting, I suppose." Then off her guard she would comport herself towards him as she would to any visitor at her aunt's. This would bring back all his love and admiration for this charming creature.

As I said, *à quoi bon*, to follow day after day these alternate sunshines and storms in each heart. Suffice it, that at the end of two months, when he came one day to tell them that they (his ship) were to be relieved in a fortnight's time; he found Grace alone at home; and then all *his* resolves, all her determinations, were cast to the winds, and Grace had found her fate: he had accomplished his ardent desire—Grace was his, and had found out and acknowledged the secret of her heart, almost unknown till then to herself.

CHAPTER XXV.

I CANNOT say that any of the family were surprised when they heard the news. They had not been so blind as not to see why he visited them so frequently. "Did I not say truly,

Grace," said Mary, "that we have no chance whilst you are by?"

"You did Mary; but you see what it was to be too secure. Take warning by my melancholy example of misplaced courage and confidence in one's own powers of resistance. However, you will soon have it all your own way, for Mr. Noel tells me that everything must be got over within a fortnight, by which time the other ship is expected."

"In a fortnight, Grace," exclaimed both girls at once, "in a fortnight!—impossible!"

"Impossible or not, it must be; since he has to go in his ship, and I have to be started off to England before he leaves. I said as you do, that it was impossible, and could not be thought of; but he would listen to no reason—only looked superb, and said that if I would not make the effort, I might as well acknowledge at once that I wanted to take back my word, and was sorry that I had given it to him, &c., &c.; so I had, after consulting my own dignity in not giving in too soon; to promise to pack up in time, but, dear girls, please leave me now, as I want to write some letters to Sligo."

Grace received in due time affectionate letters from the O'Donnells. Mr. O'Donnell promised, when he knew the day, to come up

and give away his dear little sister, who was never to forget that she belonged still to them (a priority claim, he said), and that he should like to make the acquaintance of Mr. Noel, but that Mary not being very strong, must hope for another opportunity of seeing Mr. Noel.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ONCE more Grace has pronounced the words which gives her to another ; but how different this time !

Whatever the future had in store for her, the present seemed all that she could desire—all that her heart had longed for. By her side, clasping her hand in his, stood the husband of her own choice—one whose looks of love she could fondly return—and feel: “here weary heart you can rest, here be sustained, here lean upon in trustfulness ! You are no longer alone. Here is one, in whose strong, loving arms, you will find shelter, if the stormy world rage ever so fiercely. Give yourself up, Grace, to this comforting assurance, that whatever fortune may have in store for you, either of evil or good, here is one who will help you to bear the evil;

or render more delightful, by his sharing it, the happiness in store for you."

You know enough of life to be aware that it is made up of good and evil. *You* have had experience enough, even in your short life, to know that what an old legend says, is true, "That there stands two urns at the side of Jove, out of which he doles to all mortals alternately, good and evil; but often both together."

You know this, but you say to yourself, "I have now some one to help me to bear happiness or its reverse;" and with much the same thoughts, the same hopes, these two happy mortals turned to receive the congratulations of their friends, none warmer or sincerer than those of James O'Donnell; nor will you be surprised if I tell you, that in the midst of this new-born happiness, Grace did not forget her former sorrow, but in saying adieu to her brother-in-law, she whispered to him:

"James, you won't leave off looking for Nurse or Katey?" and that she felt comforted by his strong assurance that it should never be forgotten.

"Well," said Eliza, after the bride and bridegroom had driven away to their hotel—"well, I call this a very stupid wedding. No bridesmaids, because she was a widow! No dance

after the wedding!—no nothing at all to make us merry who are left behind.”

“I am very glad of that,” said her mother; “for it is anything but a merry affair for me. Not only that I am sorry to part with Grace—for we have never had one cross word together—but it will be a loss to me in a pecuniary sense.”

“Oh, mamma,” replied Mary, “Grace said last night to me that she should never forget how kind you had been to her; and she hoped to remember that it would be a loss to you her leaving you, and that she should try and make it up some way.”

“Oh! I dare say she would if she could; but she is not her own mistress now, so we must not rely on such a promise, nor blame her if she cannot keep it. You will both have to be more economical, I can tell you.”

“Grace has promised to have me over in England as soon as she is settled, to try and get some of those diamonds we talked about. You know, mamma, that Englishmen often take a great fancy to Irish girls. Now, don’t they?” asked Eliza.

“Well, I believe they do. The liveliness of an Irish girl often attracts. The contrast they are to the starchy propriety of some, and,

indeed, of most Englishwomen—especially those who have never been out of their own country—gives the Irish girl an attractiveness, especially to timid men, which throws in the shade the perhaps more solid qualities of our English sisters.”

“O, mamma, that is too bad! Then you insinuate that we are light and frivolous?”

“No, I do not mean that altogether—though I must own we are lighter hearted, more frothy, if I may say so, than are the English. We do not endure so well as they can the troubles of life—we are less patient—we have more temper. But don’t suppose, girls, that I am going to run down my own countrywomen—for I believe that no more pure, more devoted, loving wives and mothers can be found—still, I know that English women, are, as a whole, more solid, more sensible, better home companions, than we are; who want excitement, and can hardly settle down into humdrum married life as Englishwomen can—content with their nursery; their daily walk; their stiff dinner party; their quiet month at the sea, that they go on in this jog trot style until they come to spectacles, and knitting needles, and their game of whist, feeling that they have gone through the usual routine of married life respectably.

Now, an Irishwoman, keeps young all her life, and does not, could not, sink down into such a dull life as I have been describing. To be condemned to it, she would feel as if she had been a naughty child, and had been put in the corner to punish her; and so, I must repeat, the Englishwoman is more solid—more practical than we Irish. But what a length my subject has led me on.”

“I can tell you, mamma,” answered Eliza, “that I would rather have my Irish feelings than all these solid ones, as you call them; for life is dreary at the best they say, then why not try to make it as gay and lightsome as possible, and put as much sunshine into it, by keeping as young as you can?”

“A mixture of both characters would make the most perfect—consequently the happiest; so, try, girls, to acquire those qualities you admire in English girls, and get rid of your own bad ones; that is the best advice your mother can give you.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. NOEL had written to ask leave of absence for a fortnight, and to join his ship at Sheerness—which was granted him; and he and his wife

proceeded to England a couple of days after their marriage.

Everything, of course, was very new to Grace. They went straight to London, and he had much pleasure in showing the wonders of his own Metropolis to his unsophisticated wife, who thoroughly enjoyed the novelty of everything she saw, and wrote amusing accounts of all to her relatives, both in Dublin and Sligo.

But a fortnightly honeymoon is not very long in passing, and in these war times no longer leave could be obtained by either naval or military officers. So our young couple had all too soon to repair to Sheerness, that most miserable and dirtiest of seaports—where they took lodgings, as near as they could to the ship, so that Robert and Grace might be together as much as possible.

When alone, Grace could not help contrasting the peace of this married life with the sad first experience she had had as a married woman ; and though she tried to put away the thoughts, as if it was unkind to poor Edward—yet, when her handsome, loving husband would come in after an absence, and she had no fears as to what their meeting would be ; the contrast, as I have said, would come up before her ; nor could she help the kiss of welcome being

more fervent than perhaps it need, or would have been, if the thought of long ago had not obtruded itself.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SUDDEN end was put to this enjoyable life !

One morning, about an hour after Robert had left Grace to go to his duty, he returned with a doleful expression of face !

“O, Robert ! what is the matter,” cried Grace.

“Our ship, my love, is to join Lord Nelson’s fleet for Walcheren ; and is under orders to sail in twenty-four hours !”

The young, and unhappy couple, sat for a few moments, hand in hand, unable to realize that an end had come to their few weeks of unalloyed bliss !—and such an anxious end !

“For war, Robert ! Oh ! I may never see you again—you may be killed !”

“Never fear that, little wife. Surely this is not the courage a sailor’s wife ought to show ! What distresses me, and puzzles me also, is to decide where you will stay during my absence, for it may be a short or it may be a long one. Would you prefer to return to your aunt’s, or

to go to my mother and sister—who live about twelve miles out of London?”

“Where should I be likely to hear from you the soonest?” said Grace, her voice faltering, and her lip quivering, but striving with all her might and main to keep down the rising tears, so determined was she to do her best to show her Robert, that she could be a true and brave sailor’s wife; and that she would be a help to him and not a hindrance.

“Why,” replied Robert, “of course, the nearer you are to London.”

“Then, I should like that best, Robert.”

“So should I like it best, for you, Grace. My mother would take care of you, and you are sure to like Agnes. I must write to her at once, for as we have orders to sail so soon, it gives little time for arrangements, does it?”

The young husband sat down and wrote his letter there and then, with a white and stern face; for he, too, was keeping up to encourage his wife. And then they bustled about to collect his things, for his man to pack, and to see what was requisite to add to them for a lengthened absence.

His captain had considerably told him not to come on board until the following day at noon; and as he had requested his mother to come,

or send as soon as she received his letter, for his wife, he hoped to know that they were together ere he had to leave.

Poor young couple—what a night that was for them! They sat talking until the small hours, and hardly liked to retire to rest, to put an end to their last night together—for how long?

“You will not be well to-morrow, dear Grace if you do not get some sleep.” She looked up at him, but, feeling that she should break down if she stayed a moment longer, did as he bid her, that is, went to rest—not, indeed, to sleep—how could she?

No letter came by the morning's post, and no messenger either, before poor Robert's time drew near for embarkation. So Grace promised him, that, should no messenger arrive from Blackheath that day, that all the same the next, she and her maid would go to his mother's—

“For,” said he, “I am sure that she will make a home for you, Grace; and, not having any answer from her, makes me think that she may be out.”

Grace promised all he wished, and, moreover, as the ship was not expected to sail before two the next morning, she added, “That if any news from his mother came in the course of the

day, that she should send a messenger to him with the tidings."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THEY have parted. I will not attempt to describe the scene! Who can tell, but those who have felt it, what such a parting must be between two, who are as one in feeling; would it not be a desecration to attempt to do so? He was gone; and poor Grace sank on her knees where he had left her; was it to pray for him? Ah! no, not yet; it was another impulse! To throw herself into the loving hands of God, as much as to say: "Thou art still with me: pity thy poor child!" Do not fear poor child, he does pity you; he never leaves you; he will restore what he has asked you to give up for a time, lest, by clinging too surely to human love, you should forget the only fixed and eternal love of which the earthly is but a shadow!

Poor Grace! you did indeed feel very desolate, very lonely, away from all who loved you, or knew you; you had only the attached, humble friend, Deborah, whom you had brought from Galway with you, but who loved you as persons of her class used to love superiors in those days.

When she heard the street door shut and saw Mr. Noel go away, she ran up stairs to the room he had just left, and seeing her mistress on her knees, she said to herself, "She is best there! that's where the poor thing will get comfort;" and she softly crept away, and busied herself with preparing a cup of tea, which to her mind was the great panacea for all trouble.

After awhile she went back to the sitting-room. She found Grace crouched on the ground moaning enough to break her heart. Maruth spoke to her: "Mistress, dear, look here, let me take you to your room." And Grace did let herself be lifted up in the strong arms of her maid (for what cared she what was done with her now that she had lost her Robert) and be put to bed; and she even drank the tea which Maruth brought her, saying: "Sure now, mistress darling, I made it for you myself; and I shall be so disappointed if you do not take it!"

All this time Grace had not dared to meet Maruth's eye; but as she gave her back the cup involuntarily their eyes met, and Grace burst into tears and sobs; and her poor frame was shaken by the vehemence of her grief.

Maruth sat by her side holding her hand, not speaking a word, and by degrees the sobs

lessened into, now and then, a sigh ; and the faithful girl's heart was gladdened by finding that her mistress, utterly worn out by the excitement of the previous day, the no sleep during the night, and now the exhaustion from the passion of grief she had given way to, was fast asleep.

How glad Maruth was ! and after awhile, when she was sure that she should not disturb her, she crept away to the sitting-room there to watch, lest anyone coming to the house and knocking at the door might disturb the poor sufferer.

CHAPTER XXX.

GRACE slept for two or three hours, and woke up refreshed and strengthened. Maruth was at her side immediately, and judging wisely that it was best not to give Grace time to return to her sorrowful thoughts, she at once gave her a note, "which had been brought about an hour ago, mam."

Grace rose in haste to take the note, but a shade of disappointment came over her face—she had hoped that it was from Robert—indeed, who else could it be from, as the post was gone by

for that day? But it was not in Robert's handwriting, and, like many of us, she sat turning the note about in her fingers examining it, instead of seeking the easiest solution to her puzzle, and also the simplest; namely, by opening it! "Who brought this, Maruth?" inquired she, "A tidy sort of a man, mam; and he said that he should call again in an hour's time." Hastily now opening it, Grace found that it was from her sister-in-law, "regretting that mamma was keeping her bed with a severe cold—was therefore unable to do as Robert wished, namely, go down to Sheerness for her; but that they had dispatched an old man-servant, who was very trustworthy, to take charge of her, and bring her to their house, where they should most willingly welcome dear Robert's wife, and be very pleased to make her acquaintance. They had desired the man (Barber) to consult her wishes as to the time she would wish to come, and had desired him to place himself at her disposal. She begged to remain her affectionate sister-in-law,

AGNES NOEL."

This was not a very cordial style of welcome to a relative, and it chilled poor Grace to think that she had to seek her home with persons who could write such a letter under the circumstances; but she tried to persuade herself that

Robert would not have asked her to go there, if he had not been sure that they would be kind to her, and then were they not *his* mother and sister? Well, perhaps, it was the English cold style, so different, as she had always heard, from the Irish, so hearty and warm, and probably she should find that it was merely manner, and not any real want of interest in her. Well, she would not send the letter to Robert to read, lest it might vex him, by its want of warmth and cordiality; but she sat down and wrote him a long letter, so long—wonderfully long—considering that it was only a few hours since they had parted! But what difficulty has a loving heart in expressing its feelings to the heart that understands it? When can it satisfy itself in loving words? The only difficulty is to leave off; and well for the writer and the receiver that the page is limited; and that therefore Grace was obliged to reserve a space to say, that she had arranged to leave Sheerness by nine next morning, and that she should write to his sister by that day's post to say so.

To hear this was great relief to Robert's mind, and he detained the messenger, whilst he read his letter as well as he could—blinded by tears of fond sympathy with all she said in her great love for him. He scribbled

a few lines in pencil to thank her for it, and to promise that the pilot should take her a letter from him.

The next morning, quite by six, Grace and Maruth were at the water side, to see if the ship was still there; but no, only a space where it had before been. Nor was even a speck perceptible in the distance, even by the aid of a telescope. Alas! alas! he was really gone!

She turned away, feeling now quite alone, and desolate. As long as she felt and knew that he was near, she did not realize the fact that she should not see him again for a long time. Ah, indeed—for how long? She walked back to her lodgings, longing for nine o'clock, to be going too. She could not have remained there. No, how thankful she was that she had arranged to go at once to Blackheath.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHEN Grace arrived at Beechwood Lodge it was about four in the afternoon, for, you must remember, it was in the coaching days.

The trim servant-maid, who opened the door, informed her that Miss Noel was out, but would be in, in a few minutes—that she had

desired her to say so, should the lady arrive during her absence;—that Mrs. Noel was in bed. But would the lady be pleased to take a chair, and was there anything she could get for her? Grace thanked the young woman for her civility, but preferred waiting until Miss Noel should come in.

I shall leave Grace waiting in the parlour. I must own she was low, and anxious as to what her new friends would turn out, and very chilled and depressed at not having found a warmer welcome. However, she was one of those who always tried to think the best of everyone, so she said to herself, “Perhaps Miss Noel could not help being out.” Well, I said that we should leave our heroine waiting, and during the time describe the people with whom she was to make her home.

Mrs. Noel was a lady above sixty years of age, who had led an active and busy life, having been left a widow with five or six children, without a very ample provision for them. Still, by great prudence and economy, she had contrived to bring up, and give good professions to her two sons, and to marry two daughters well and happily. The eldest remained unappropriated, and lived with her.

To a woman who had led such an active life,

and who was naturally of an anxious, overbearing temper, the comparative idleness which was now her lot, was not one which rendered her temper more amiable or gentler; on the contrary, she was quite the reverse of amiable—peevish and worrying; and having really been a good and a painstaking mother, very devoted to her children, was very exacting and jealous of the slightest appearance of not being the first in their thoughts; and, any fancied want of confidence, was sure to be the source of endless reproaches and demonstrations of being ungratefully, unnaturally neglected by children; she was constantly saying, “Children who ought never to forget what she had done for them.”

Nor *did* they forget; but, as most of them had by this time formed other ties, they could not be so entirely hers as before. Had she been reasonable, she would have accepted her natural place, and have enjoyed the position of a loved mother and adviser, which they would all have considered her; but no; she could not see, nor consent to see, that she was in a different position to those who were married than to them when they were single.

The eldest son, Captain Noel, had been in India some years, holding a post under Govern-

ment, nor had he married ; so that when Robert wrote one week to tell her that he was engaged, and in a few days added that, on account of the order to go to Sheerness, he was to be married on the following Thursday, she was extremely angry. He had not even waited to hear her opinion ; and, to add to his wrong and hasty determination, he was marrying an Irishwoman.

Although Robert had told her Grace's age, and her fortune (small though it was, it was better than she had been able to give her own daughters on their marriages), yet she had worked herself into the conviction that "Robert was throwing himself away! Well, he must abide it ; he has made his own bed"—a saying I cannot endure to hear. It always appears to me, however true, to be so very cruel : because you have done a foolish, an inconsiderate thing, which even takes from you that blessing which often enables the most afflicted to bear their misfortunes, namely, their comfortable bed and rest, you, who have by your own act, deprived yourself of an easy bed, are not to be pitied, because you have strewn that bed with ashes, with hard lumps, which gall you, and take away your ease. You are not to be pitied ! Why, surely it is *une raison de plus* to excite commiseration, and to obtain from others the

more sympathy and pity. Away with such cold-hearted sayings!

So, you can imagine that it was not with any pleasure or satisfaction that Mrs. Noel received Robert's letter, asking her to receive his wife, and give her a home during his absence.

At first she was determined to write and say that she must decline doing so; but Agnes Noel, by dint of putting before her that it would be no expense (Robert had assured her of that), and also that it would look so very bad to every one, that when her son was going off to the war, that she had, without any reason, refused to receive his young wife under her roof—(and Mrs. Noel was very sensitive to what the world said)—and by also promising that her mother should not be more troubled with her daughter-in-law than absolutely necessary, she allowed Agnes to write the note we have already seen.

And Agnes, what was she like? Would she be likely to make up to Grace for her mother's shortcomings? Well, on one very essential point she would, for she loved her younger brother with a devotion which was truly unselfish. Therefore, although she knew that Grace had taken away a heart which had been entirely hers, yet it had not made her love her brother

less—he still reigned in her heart supreme! so that to have any way shown her how she could prove her love to him, was very welcome to Agnes; and she determined that it should not be her fault if Grace was not as happy as she could be, separated from her husband.

Just at the time she expected her sister-in-law, her mother wanted a commission executed, and she did not dare to ask her mother to wait until after Grace's arrival, lest she should retort with, "Ah, you see! just what I said; everything is to be put out by this little madam's arrival." So she went to perform her mother's wish, very annoyed to leave the house that afternoon. She hurried home, and even then ran up to her mother first, before she went to welcome her new sister. "Come up as soon as you can, Agnes, and tell me what she is like. I hope to goodness that she is presentable. The foolish boy!" again harped poor Mrs. Noel.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AGNES stood for a moment with the handle of the door in her hand—her heart beat so fast at the thought of the stranger—Robert's wife!

She need not have been so fluttered, for

when she entered Grace was on the sofa, fast asleep: her bonnet, which she had taken off, lay on her lap; her hair had become unfastened, and fell in a shower, as it were, over her shoulder, and she looked "a perfect picture." Her maid was seated on the floor, leaning her head against the end of the sofa, asleep also. Poor souls! their sleepless night before, and their long coach journey, had completely overpowered them, and they had both forgotten care and fatigue in a calm and heavy sleep.

Agnes stood over her new sister for a few moments, saying, "Poor girl, she is utterly worn out; but how lovely! I do not wonder at Robert's giving his heart to her. I am so glad that she is so beautiful! Mamma must like her. She will be sure to do so. She likes everything that is beautiful. Poor dear child (for Grace looked so very young asleep), I will sit down and wait until she awakes. But, no; perhaps I had better go out quietly, and tell mamma, otherwise she will think me too long away."

As she shut the door, gently as it was done, it startled Grace, who looked up for a moment, but seeing no one, relapsed again into sleep, but this time not so profoundly, so when Agnes returned, and stood for a moment over Grace,

again admiring, and taking the new relation into her heart, Grace opened her eyes, stared for a moment, and recollection coming all at once, she darted up, saying, "Are you Agnes?—but I am sure you are," she flung her arms round Agnes's neck, and wept uncontrollably.

Of course Agnes was unaccustomed to such strong demonstrations of feeling; but she did not repulse it, but held the weeping girl tenderly in her arms; for the short time that she had beforehand seen Grace, whilst she slept, seemed to have melted the ice of her English reserve, and she was ready to respond to the touching appeal, "Oh, love me, for poor Robert's sake!"

"Indeed, indeed I will, for your own sake, as well as Robert's, you poor dear thing. How tired you are! But come upstairs to your room, and whilst you bathe your face and take off your things, I will order tea. Oh, you dear little Grace!" and she kissed her again; "how glad I am that you have come to me. You will excuse seeing mamma to-night, dear. She will be up to-morrow."

So they went up to the room next Agnes's own, which she had prepared for Grace with everything she could think of to make it pleasant and pretty. And I will say at once that

nothing ever interrupted the friendship that had begun in that one warm embrace, and that in all the disagreeables which Grace had to bear from her mother-in-law, Agnes always came to her rescue, and always strove to lessen the acerbity of her mother's temper towards Grace. That Agnes was the first to welcome the little girl which in due course made its appearance, and which increased rather than diminished Mrs. Noel's annoyance at having her daughter-in-law in her house. "She was past," she said, "liking the noise of infants." So, when her husband came home, Grace chose a residence near Mrs. Noel's, but left Beechwood Lodge. She was glad to remain near Agnes, as she enjoyed her friendship and society; Grace discovered that it was happier for Agnes, this arrangement; for the latter had undergone much annoyance in preventing sundry threatened outbursts of her mother's, which would have made a breach between Grace and her mother-in-law, had they come to daylight.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

As this is the story of Grace's life, I need not enter on the subject of the exciting times in

which she lived, except inasmuch as they affected her. It was a time when neither a naval nor military man had much peace or home comforts.

Occasionally, Robert came home for two or three months—sometimes only for as many weeks; and so the next two years of Grace's life passed, and found her still living near Mrs. Noel at Heath Cottage.

Her life had been diversified by two more children, a boy and girl being added to their family, and by one or two visits from the O'Shawnessys; and once she had the great joy of welcoming Mr. and Mrs. O'Donnell to her home, as with them she had always kept up a continuous correspondence.

Robert Noel had by this time become a post-captain, and his ship was sent out to join the small fleet that was hovering about the coast of Italy; and which sometimes went down as far as Trieste.

It was one summer's evening, when Grace (after seeing her little ones to bed, a task she always shared with her faithful Maruth), sitting by the open window, observed a woman walking up and down the house, and constantly looking in, seemingly undecided as to whether she should pull the bell at the entrance gate or not.

She had acted in this manner so often, as

to make Grace observe her ; and to feel so strangely wrought upon by the woman's peculiar manner, as to begin to feel very nervous. Moreover, there seemed to come to her mind every now and then a remembrance of the woman's features which puzzled her.

So she rose hastily to ring the bell, and to desire that Maruth might be sent to her immediately.

The woman had turned her back, and was continuing her walk, when Maruth answered her mistress's summons.

"Maruth, stand here, and tell me, do you see that woman walking slowly up there?"

"Yes, mam."

"Well, wait until she turns, and tell me if you know who it is?" And Grace related to Nurse what she had observed peculiar in the woman's proceedings.

By this time the stranger was coming towards them, when Maruth, suddenly crimsoning to the very roots of her hair, said, "I think I do know her, dear mistress ; I will go out and speak to her, and see if I am not right ;" but, she added, turning affectionately to her mistress, "don't be uneasy, it may only be my fancy."

Why she was to be uneasy, Grace could not divine ; and, as is usually the case, the very

precaution taken to prevent her being anxious, was the very means to make her see that there was a something that she had to apprehend, though what she could not tell.

In the meantime, Maruth was at the gate ; and as soon as the strange woman saw her looking towards her, she hastened up to her. Grace, who was watching the two women, saw them shake hands, then both came towards the house. As they neared the window, the same vague sense of having seen the face before stole over her ; and, as a sudden thought struck her, the blood rushed to her face, and then as quickly receded, and she had to lay her hand on her heart to still its quick beating. Was it not Katey—Nurse O'Birn's daughter, the foster-mother of her lost boy ? Oh ! surely it was ; but, for the very life of her, she could not have moved ; and it seemed hours before Maruth came in to her.

When Maruth came, the troubled and frightened expression of the woman's face, confirmed Grace's suspicions, and she could barely articulate, " my child ! my child ! " when she fell on the floor in a faint.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TENDERLY and anxiously did her faithful maid lift her on the sofa, and apply remedies to restore her to consciousness. When sufficiently recovered, she heard that it was indeed Katey, who had sought her out to tell her all about her long lost child.

"Oh, Maruth, send her in directly to me; I cannot wait."

"But do you think that you are equal to see her, mam? Had you not better wait a little while?"

"Oh! no, no; I cannot wait. Oh, Maruth, think how long I *have* waited; let her come in, let her come in at once."

"Well then, mistress dear, drink this glass of wine;" and Maruth poured out a glass of sherry that was standing on the sideboard. To satisfy her, Grace did take the proffered stimulant, and repeated her wish to see Katey immediately.

"Stop, Maruth, is he alive?"

"Dear mistress, she would not tell me; she said that it was to you, and you only, that she would speak."

"Then bring her directly."

She had not many minutes to wait. At first,

Grace's impulse was to cover her face with her hands, as if she could not bear the sight of one who had brought so much misery to her ; but the sound of Katey's footstep nerved her, and the longing to hear what she had to tell her, braced her sufficiently to drive back the welling tears that fain would come, as she once more beheld the foster-mother of her first-born, whose face recalled that first phase in her life—one that had been so full of trial and suffering to her.

The first thing Katey did was to throw herself on her knees, and violently clasp her hands, crying out—

“ Oh, then, mistress, forgive me for all the pain and distress my mother put you to ; and that I did not prevent ! ”

“ Tell me, does my child live ? Oh ! tell me at once. Get up Katey (for the woman knelt sobbing violently), get up ; and there, there, I forgive you ; if you will but tell me that he lives ! ”

“ He does mam, to the best of my knowledge. ”

“ Then you are not sure. Oh ! why did you come, if you could not tell me ? What was the use of tearing open the wounds so long closed ? Woman, what has brought you to me ? ” Grace said this in a stern cold manner ; for she felt as

if these people were pursuing her with cruelty—as if they could not leave her in peace ; the peace she had striven so hard to attain. For, although she had never forgotten her little Edward—nay, often talked to Robert about him, to make him love the memory of her cherished little one—still time, fifteen years, had done its work and softened the poignancy of her grief ; and she could think and talk of that dreadful time, as if it was a page out of a story, long ago read. Happy as she was now, she could hardly realize that that page was out of the story of her own life, and that she had suffered all these pangs ! So it did seem cruel to reopen these wounds, especially if she could give her no satisfaction on the vital question of her darling's ultimate fate !

Some time elapsed before either of the women could begin—the one to question, the other to relate, with any coherence. At last, fully understanding that Katey had had no hand—at least, no direct hand—in inflicting such a trouble on her, she besought her to tell her from the beginning to the end the story, and then she should be able to make out whether her son still lived ; for she found to all her questions on that point, she got the same answer—“To the best of my knowledge. I hope so,

mam ; but you shall judge for yourself." Maruth had discreetly withdrawn to her nursery, for she wisely concluded that Katey would be more communicative if Grace was alone with her, than if one of her own class was listening to what she had to relate.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SHE related how they had left Seeley's Lane, as we know, and how they had got to Achill. I think you will remember Grace's power of listening, without interrupting the person relating anything in which she was deeply interested, fearing to break the thread of the story ; as she gave evidence when the old butler tried her so sorely. Had she not this invaluable quality (and a rare one, too), she must have betrayed the inward start she felt when she heard that her child had been so near her as Achill, whilst they were looking for him elsewhere.

Then Katey told her how she had wondered not to see her (Grace) arrive, or send for the child ; and the cunning (" betwixt me and all wrong for saying the word of my mother !") of nurse in giving Katey to understand that Grace

was going to marry, and did not wish the boy to be seen by the new husband, and that *that* was why she was to keep him dark. Katey did not mind telling how cold-hearted she thought it of his mother, and how she never seemed to care for her any more, "Saving your presence, and axing your pardon for telling you that same, mam."

"And so, mam, the first six months passed; and one day one of the neighbours (for there were two other houses there besides our own) came home from the fair at Castlebar, and he had been asked to bring some tea and sugar for us, for mother would not let me go for it, nor leave the island. I think she feared my tongue; and you know, mam, what a woman my mother was for having her own way, God rest her soul! So the man came in to us with the tea, and he sat down to give us the news and all the talk there was just then. 'And,' says he, 'do ye know there's a funny thing that I heard, and it was posted on the wall, it was; that there's a child lost or stolen, it said, and a great sum of money offered to those who may find it.' Mother turned quickly round, as though to drive one of the children away who stood near her, and kept her face away for a minute or two, and then turning round she axed, 'And

whose child was it?' 'I can't read very well,' says he; 'but I asked about it. I think it was Joyce. No, that was not the name; but it is a good name.'

"'Is it O'Donnell?' said I. 'Ah, there you have it,' says he. But mother gave me such a black look, I did not dare to say more. And just then Tim Doolan added (that was the neighbour's name, please mam), 'Well, then, I would not be in the shoes of them that's done that ugly deed to steal anybody's child.' 'No,' said our cousin Mary Dwyer, 'you may well say that, Tim; but what would be done to them if they is found out, as they is sure to be, for the Lord always brings to light bad deeds?' 'That's true for you, Mary Dwyer. Why, to be sure, I heard tell that they'd be transported, or may be hanged.'

"Then indeed, mam, *you* even would have pitied my mother—rest her soul—if you had seen the big drops of sweat as stood like beads on her forehead; and it was as much as she could do to sit it out" (Grace could not help thinking serve her right). "Fortunately, Tim soon went away. When he was fairly out of sight, my mother got up from her seat, and tottered out into the open air. I went to her, but she pushed me back, and sat, or almost fell

on the grass, and there she remained for ever so long: at last she called me, and said—

“ ‘ You see, Katey, if you don’t hold your tongue, you’ll get me hanged ; but I’ll take the boy, and leave him at her door some night, when there is no fear I’ll be seen. But you be silent ; keep dark, unless you want to hang me ! ’ She made me swear by everything sacred that I would leave it to her, and never even to my own John tell what she had done. And then, mam, I knew that it was none of your doing the hiding Master Teddie, but all my mother’s work. But, please, what could I do ? Would you have told, and got your mother hanged ? ”

“ Go on,” said Grace.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“ FROM that time my mother was miserable—nor would she let the boy out of her sight, especially if any strangers came—either on business or to the neighbours. She kept him with her.”

“ Then he never learnt to read or write ? ” enquired Grace.

“ Then, indeed, he did, mam ! You know how mother was set upon that for me even, for

she had me taught—for she said, she knew how bad it was not to have a bit of learning.”

“But if she never let him off the island how could he learn?” asked Grace.

“Why, you see, mam, one of the neighbours had a son, who kept a bit of a school at Castlebar, and he used to come home now and then, and generally on a Sunday morning, and mother paid him to teach Master Teddie, and wasn’t it he that was the good schollard? He beat all for the good writing! He was so fond of his book, that mother got Barney Cogan to bring him a new book once in a way; and he would sit, the poor soul, as quiet as a mouse, spelling the words, until he could read quite well.

“After we had been about three years at Achill, I received a letter from John, to say that his ship, the ‘Kelpie,’ had come into Plymouth; and he sent me the money to take myself and the boy there to him. I only returned to Achill two years ago with my husband and the three children we now have, saving your presence. It was too much for me to have charge of so many by myself, and the reason why I returned therewas, that mother sent word that she was growing weak and ill, and wanted to see me, and I’d best come and take care of things, or they’d go to rack and

ruin. You see, mam, our cousin Mary was dead some time, and had left mother the place, and the bits of things she had ; and she had saved a good penny, which mother found in an old tin mug under her bed in a corner.

“So mother said that she would pay my expenses if I'd come. So, as I said, we went, as to be sure we ought to do that same, not only bekase mother was growing old, but as John said, says he, we ought not to let the property go to strangers, and we got children, you see, mam.

“Well, I found Master Teddie still with mother, and growed ever so fine a boy! I knew that he was thirteen, bekase he was the same age as my Johnnie; so says I, ‘Mother, have you never let Mrs. O'Donnell, the creature—saving your presence, mam—know about her boy?’

“‘Why, you see, Katey,’ says she, ‘I did once go to Galway, and found that she had gone to Dublin, or somewhere else. No one knew where she was; so, sure, I could not go travelling the world over to find her, and maybe get myself hanged, drawn and quartered! And then you see, it would have gone hard with me to part with Master Edward's boy—who I loved almost, yes, sure as much, as his own father! And then to

be sure, how could I get on without him, now you was gone? He did everything for me; and a stronger, kinder boy isn't to be met this side of Mallerina—if I'm ill he tends me—he does the bit of work like a girl—'” At this part of the recital poor Grace could not conceal a look of indignation, which Katey, sharp-witted as she was, perceived. “Well, mam, you're thinking that's not the work his father's son ought to have been put to, and I won't say but that its true for you; but she's gone, and please you'll forgive her, as I trust the Lord has this day. Well, mam, my John used to amuse the young lads—that's my Johnnie and Master Teddie—with stories of what he had seen, and where he had been, and how he had fought the French, until Master Teddie got to love it so much, that he began to wish that he too could go to sea!

“My mother was not pleased, but the more she scolded the more it seemed to fix it in the boy's mind, and he more than once said to John, ‘Take me with you, daddie John. I must go. I can't stay here no more.’”

“Well, mam, the long and the short of it is, that we persuaded mother to let the boy have his way. For says John to her, says he, ‘Now you've got Katey and the young children with

you, you don't want him so much ; and if you don't let him go with me, he'll go without me, he will, for he's as good as told me so.' And then, mam, I told mother when I was alone with her, that that would be a way of getting him off her hands, in case it should be found out the thing she had done, for if he's not here, he can't be proved, says I. So by going on at her in that way, we got her to let John take him with our boy, when he returned to England in about six weeks time.

"And where did your husband take him to?"

"Well, mam, you see he went back to Plymouth, and then he found the same boatswain that he had gone to sea with before, and who was a good friend to him, so he up and he told him how he had got two boys with him, and that he wanted to get them to sea ; that they was both about thirteen, and very sightly lads, too, and both able to read and write. 'Why,' says he, 'if that's true, ye are in the nick of time, for they's wanting midshipmen, and there are posters put up asking for them. Take your boys,' says he, 'or I will for you to the office, and I'll be bound I'll get them passed as midshipmen. Worse nor them has got in.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"WELL, mam, so he did, bless him this day, and the Lord be good to him, for Master Teddie and my Johnnie has as good a chance of being captain as the best of them, if the Lord spare them, the creatures!"

"And in what ship did they go out?" For it immediately struck Grace that Robert would find out all the rest for her.

"Well, mam, it is the 'Mercury.' This is the writing I am to put on when I send a letter," and Katey took out of her pocket a piece of brown paper, folded several times, and in the middle of these folds was a piece of white paper, on which was written—

"His Majesty's sloop of war 'Mercury,' one of the fleet on the coast of Italy. *Ibi ubi.*"

"Please, mam, when last John wrote he said that both the boys was doing well, and Master Teddie was the bravest boy in the fleet, and a great favourite with all the sailors. Every one had a good word for O'Birn. Oh!" said Katey, reddening to the very roots of her hair, covered with confusion, wondering how the missis would like it—"oh, bedad! I forgot to tell you that he always was known by my mother's name, and was put on the books as Edward O'Birn."

“And what has made you at last come to me after so many years of silence? and how did you find out where I was?”

“Sure, mam, from the day John took away Master Edward my mother never held up her head, she fretted that much. She was always fancying that now the whole business would come out, and she would get the punishment. Well, it told on her that much that she had to take to her bed, and could not eat or drink. This went on for three or four months, and at last she got so bad that I had to get a doctor from Castlebar, for you see, mam, I could well pay him out of my mother’s panican.

“He told me that she was just wasting away, and that she would not last long.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“OH, mam, if you knew the trouble it was to her, and to me, that she could not see the priest. There had been a kind old man, who had come three year ago to the Island, but mother would not then go to her duty. You see she had Master Teddie on her mind, and was afeard to tell, bekase she knew that he would; (the priest, I mean) would tell her that she must

make it known before she could be received to the absolution, and tell it she would not. Now, how frightened she was to die, like a dog, as she said. No priest!—no confession! I did my best for her; and said the rosary by her bedside every night.

“One night she woke up in a great hurry. ‘Katey,’ says she to me, says she, ‘I’m going fast; promise me on your sacred oath that you’ll find Mrs. Edward out, wherever she may be, and tell her about Teddie, the darling! and ask her to forgive me, for I shall never rest in my grave until she does forgive me. I know that I shall *walk* until she gets her boy;’ and she clutched my hand, and held it so tight that she frightened me. I did not answer, because you see, mam, I did not know where you was; and how was I to leave my children? But she held me fast, and said, ‘Swear, Katey, swear! I’ll never leave you quiet if you don’t. I’ll curse you with a mother’s sorrowful curse, if you won’t promise to go to all parts of the earth’s end, till you find her or hers, and ask for the forgiveness!’

“What could I do, but promise? for sure a mother’s curse is worse than having to leave one’s children for a time. So, mam, I swore, as she wanted me. ‘And now,’ says she, ‘you

can't forego your swearing, Katey, for any body, or anything. Sure, now, I'll bless you.' And then she let go my hand, and fell, quite tired out, on her pillow, and I thought that she was going to die, for the excitement was great for her, you see, mam. However, I got up and gave her something out of the bottle the doctor had given me for her, and it quieted her.

"But what is the use of telling you more, mam? She died that next night. She had been in a sort of doze all day, and never spoke any more to me.

"I felt very lonesome; for, hard woman as she had been to others, she had a soft spot in her heart for me. You see, mam, she had only me," and Katey's eyes filled up with tears; "but now," she resumed, after wiping the tears away with the corner of her apron, "but now, I had no peace night or day about my swearing, mam. I was always fancying that mother was looking at me, with the black look she could put on when she was angered. So I went into Galway, and looked out my aunt's daughter, Joan; and I found that she was married, and had two children, but her husband was 'listed; and, as she was all alone, I asked her would she come to Achill, and take charge of my things, and my children, whilst I had to go a

journey. 'To be sure I will,' says she, 'and thank you, for Galway does not particularly agree with me, nor the children.' (You see, mam, my mother's people came from the other side of Limerick, so they never much warmed to Galway, though there's many a one likes it, and lives well there.) So, as she consented, that was off my mind, for she was ready to come when I wanted her; so I agreed that she might as well come at once, to learn my ways.

"I then went about Galway a bit, asking questions about you; and there was one Mrs. Maloney, they said, could tell me a good deal. I went to her at once.

"'You mean Mrs. Maloney in Claddagh Street?' inquired Grace.

"Yes, mam, that same. Well, she's a good woman, is that same Mrs. Maloney; and didn't she talk of you mam, and the kind friend you'd always been to her, when she wanted a friend. 'And what do you want with her?' says she. But you know, mam, I could not let on for fear of angrying my mother's spirit if I told her the bad deed that had been done; and then always for the shame, I would not tell. So I thought of Maruth, who used to live with you, and I asked whether she knew was Maruth still with

you, for I knew she was friends with Maruth's friends.

“‘Indeed, then, she is,’ says she, ‘and a good steady girl she is, and a credit to her people, to stick by her missis,’ says she. ‘You may say that same, Widow Maloney,’ says I; ‘she comes of a good stock, you see,’ says I. ‘And so she does,’ says she. ‘And where will I get her directions?’ says I. ‘At her sister’s,’ says she; ‘and where else?’ says she. ‘Then be good enough to have the kindness to tell me,’ says I, ‘and in what street is her sister living in, if you please?’ ‘Owen Street,’ says she; ‘but perhaps you’ll stop for a cup of tea,’ says she; ‘for I’m thankful that I am doing that well that I can give you that same, the Lord be praised, and Mrs. Edward who helped me to the bit of a shop when I was a widow, and got some of the quality to buy their cottons of me.’ ‘No thank you, kindly, Mrs. Maloney,’ say I, ‘and its myself that is obliged to you, this day, for your kind offer, but I want to get back to Achill—’ will you believe me, mam, I let it slip out unthanking, and I felt frightened when I had, for I had been so accustomed you see, mam, never to let on where mother and I lived; but I need not have minded, for there was no reason now the poor mother was gone—rest her soul.

"I need not tell what passed between Maruth's sister and me ; she gave me the directions, and Maruth's last letter to see, and I copied the words on to a bit of paper.

"That night I took my cousin and her children home with me, for she was only in lodgings, and earned her bread the best she could. I stayed to the home until I thought she knew all my ways, and one of my neighbours promised to see she did all right by my children, and then I began my journey.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"I GOT a passage over to Liverpool, and I've walked all the way from Liverpool to this, for I thought it was more like doing penance for my mother if I walked it, and now, mam," said Katey, throwing herself suddenly on her knees, and clasping her hands together, "now, mam, say that you forgive my poor mother the wrong she did you, that her poor soul may rest in peace. Oh ! mam, do not refuse me, as you hope to be forgiven."

Grace knelt down for a moment, covering her face with her hands, praying her heavenly father to help her to forgive the dead woman

the injury she had done her, and not only her, but the injury such a bringing up might have done her son.

After a few minutes she rose up, and laying her hand on Katey's shoulder, she said—"Yes, good daughter, I do forgive, as I hope to be forgiven; and now let us say a '*de profundis*' for her poor soul.

With what devotion poor Katey joined in that prayer, and what a calm—what a peace Grace felt as the sweet words of that psalm fell from her lips!

Oh! what a grace; what a blessing comes with that divine and entire forgiveness of injuries. The heart which has throbbed with painful emotion whilst enduring the wrong, as had Grace's so many years; every time that she thought of Nurse O'Birn; now seemed eased of some deadly thing, and as if peace and love took full possession of it. What a weight had been removed! The constant keeping down unkind thoughts, bad wishes for the punishment of the offender, is a most wearisome task, and *one* which makes "life a pedlar's pack which one would fain put down."

Yes; those heartfelt words, "I forgive," and the mountain is removed! Beat on poor tried heart, all now is peaceful; no more un-

certain or subdued throbs of indignation. The heavenly messenger has come with his "peace on earth to men of good will." Oh! cherish your guest, and reap the rich reward of the effort you have made to imitate your model.

After a few minutes Grace rang the bell. "Tell Nurse to come to me! I shall send you with Maruth, Katey, to get some refreshment: I must be alone. However you must stay here with Maruth. I will speak with you again to-morrow!"

What an evening Grace passed! She hardly realized all she had heard; she could hardly put it in order. How much she wished her dear husband was with her—how tiresome that no mail would go out for another week or ten days! How odd that Robert should be in the same fleet as her long lost boy, but yet how lucky; for would it not facilitate the meeting him?

And then she could not help thinging what a strange bringing up for an O'Donnell! So different from what she had anticipated or intended; no teaching but in the desultory manner described! With such an ignorant person as Nurse O'Birn, it was well that he had got even the little he had. Then she began to build castles; that if he was clever, as she was sure he must be,

she should soon make up for lost time by having a tutor for him ; and then it did not require a very learned man for the sea. It was true that Robert had received a college education—his mother having intended him for the Church, though he had chosen the sea after all. Still Grace had met plenty of naval men who were gentlemanly but not learned, so it did not signify about her Edward ; the great point was she should see him again.

Then Grace wondered what the lad himself would think when he found that nurse was not his mother, as Katey had admitted he had always called her. What would he be like ?—like poor Edward ! would he be fond of her ? What would he think of his brothers and sisters, would they be kind and loving to each other ? And so Grace would have gone on for hours thinking and wondering, forgetful of time, had not her faithful maid, Maruth, come in with some slight refection, which she always took at night, and roused her to reality.

“ Oh ! Maruth, has she told you ? What a strange story !——”

“ Well, no, mam, I did not encourage her to talk, for the poor thing seemed quite broken down and done up with fatigue. She tells me that she walked all the way from Liverpool ;

sometimes twenty miles a-day, never less than ten; and her poor feet are in such a dreadful state with blisters that I bathed them, put her to bed, and then gave her her sup of tea in bed! Now she is fast asleep, the poor thing. God help her!"

CHAPTER XL.

GRACE bade Maruth sit down, and she then told her the pith of Katey's communication. You may be sure that there were plentiful ejaculations of "Oh, dear me's! now think of that's!"—Nor must you be astonished that Grace so far unbent to her maid, as to talk of such an event with her; but remember how many years Maruth had been with her! and that this humble but trustworthy friend had been with her when she first lost her child; and knew and took part in all that trouble. So she felt it was a sort of duty to tell Maruth all about it. She knew full well how entire would be her sympathy with her, and what a tender feeling heart beat in her honest, though homely breast.

I may as well finish about Katey, as we shall not want to hear of her again, though I cannot help wishing her well.

She stayed at Heath Cottage for two or three weeks ; until, in fact, she was not only rested, but felt vigorous enough to undertake the journey home. Nor, you may be sure, did Grace let her go on foot to Liverpool, but paid her expenses all the way to Achill. She also sent presents for her two children, and gave several nice keepsakes for herself. Nor was Widow Maloney forgotten, who remembered Grace so kindly. Maruth charged her also with some little packages for friends. "But," said Katey to Maruth, the evening before she left, "you might give me a ton weight to carry back ; it would not be equal by half to the load I brought with me. For oh ! Maruth, it is a dreadful weight on you to have your dead mother frowning at you until you keep your promise to her."

CHAPTER XLI.

I AM now going to take my readers to a great distance from Heath Cottage, even to the coast of Italy, where a small English fleet were keeping watch over French proceedings.

In one ship, the "Mercury," Katey's husband, his son, and Edward O'Donnell (*alias*

O'Birn) were serving. In another of the six ships which composed the squadron Captain Noel commanded.

Robert's astonishment was great on receiving Grace's letter, telling him all about Katey's visit, and that her son was in the very fleet he was attached to.

He determined on the first opportunity to go on board the "Mercury," so as to be able to assure his wife that he had seen her son. He thought that it would be best not to make himself known to Edward until he had ascertained what kind of character he bore.

On ordering his boat out to go on board the "Mercury," he was informed that the Admiral had recently sent that ship as far down as Trieste, and that it had not returned. They were then, the rest of the squadron, lying at the mouth of the Po. So, giving orders that some one was to be on the look-out for the return of the "Mercury," and to acquaint him as soon as it was in sight, he had to take patience, and occupy himself with beginning a letter to Grace, to be sent when he could add about Edward.

In a couple of days it hove in sight, and the next morning Robert determined to pay his visit.

When he came on deck to proceed on his

visit, he found his men here and there talking in a very excited manner. He inquired "what was the matter?" and then was told, that one of the midshipmen of the "Mercury," they had heard, had met with an accident, in consequence of some order given by his captain, and which order was out of the regular course of things for the lad to be required to execute.

"What's his name?" inquired Captain Noel; "I mean the midshipman's?"

No one could rightly say. One fancied it was this, another that. So, Robert at once ordered his boat to be lowered, filled with anxiety, yet thinking himself a fool for his pains. "Why should it be Edward? Only it would be such a misfortune, just as Grace was enjoying the idea of seeing him, to have to write home such news!"

He was soon alongside of the "Mercury," and, after shaking hands with the first lieutenant, he inquired for Captain * * *. He was not on board; he had gone to the flag-ship, to make his report to the admiral. Lieutenant McKinnon said this in such a peculiar manner, and his expression was so strange, that Robert could not help saying, "Is anything wrong?"

"It is not for me to say," answered Lieutenant McKinnon, "at least, I had better not."

"Well, well, you are right," returned Robert, "and I was wrong to ask you; however, oblige me by answering this question: have you a midshipman on board, of the name of O'Birn?"

The lieutenant started! "Yes, sir, we have. Do you know him?"

"I can't just say that I do; but I know his friends, and was requested to look him up; would you mind telling me what kind of a lad he is?"

The lieutenant looked round, and seeing that there were several officers and sailors hanging about, he asked Captain Noel, "would you come down to my cabin, and then I will answer your query; I cannot talk here." He said this in a low tone; but added aloud, "If you will please to walk down, Captain Noel, you can wait for Captain * * * 's return.

Shutting the door of his cabin, McKinnon begged Robert to be seated, and then gave him a rapid account of young O'Birn, which I shall retail by transcribing a letter which I afterwards read when I went on a visit to dear Grace; suffice it to say here, that Robert did not wait to see Captain * * *, as he was sure that he should not be sufficiently master of his feelings to meet him with ease of manner; and that the contrary might entail disagreeables on

Lieutenant McKinnon after his having been so long closeted with him, as would be sure to come to the captain's ears.

CHAPTER XLII.

“MY DEAREST GRACE,

“Of course your communication surprised me not a little; how very peculiarly things happen! People are fond of attributing to chance, events, which instead, are beautiful leadings of Providence. In the fact of Edward's being in the same squadron as myself, what becomes of your theory of sympathy? Ought I not to have felt drawn towards my step son by some secret and unaccountable magnetism? I must have seen him several times, and yet never felt any attraction nor inclination to follow him, even with my eyes.

“Do not think the worse of me, nor imagine that Edward's is not a congenial soul with mine! but to put aside badinage, I have seen him. He is so like you that I wonder at myself for not having remarked him before. Above all, dear wife, he is worthy of being your son, and I am proud to be able to tell you that just now he is quite a hero, and that it is

quite a feather in my cap to claim him as my step son.

"I know that you like me in all stories to begin at the beginning, so prepare for a very long yarn.

"I have quite a week before me for writing, as we shall not put in anywhere to post this, so I shall add a little each day.

"It was unfortunate that Edward got into the 'Mercury,' for the captain, whose name I will not mention, is one of the greatest tyrants that disgrace our navy. His punishments are something atrocious. To give you an instance: He had a man rolled up and down the deck in a barrel as fast as the men could do it; and another for a week was fastened in a barrel, and fed through the bung hole, the only air he got (however, don't fear that I am going to add that Edward has been subject to such horrors). You will ask how a man could be allowed to act in such a barbarous manner; remember, we are all powerful on board our own ship; there is no appeal. Well, to get on with my story.

"Such is the man Edward was placed under, and although midshipmen have not much to do with their captain, yet, of course, everyone, more or less, comes under the captain's observation.

"Now, it seems that Captain * * * took a

fancy to *our* Edward, and, on several occasions, singled him out, to send on some message: the youth being quick and bright, pleased him.

"Like all tyrants, Captain * * * was very tenacious of what was said of him, and he especially disliked his first lieutenant, McKinnon; perhaps McKinnon could hardly forbear showing his disgust at some of the captain's cruelties—and perhaps he feared that he might talk at head-quarters—which, between me and you, I think McKinnon ought to have done; but subordinates are so afraid of meddling with their superiors.

"As I said, Captain * * * took a fancy to Edward, and on two or three occasions called him into the cabin and gave him a glass of wine and some fruit, knowing that to be the way to a boy's heart.

"When he thought he had insured the boy's gratitude, so to say, he one day called him into his cabin, gave him his usual 'treat,' and then opened his mind to him in these words—'O'Birn, I think that you are an intelligent lad, and I am going to entrust you with a commission, which I would not give to anyone else.' 'Thank you, sir,' said Edward. 'I shall expect you to do your best, and I shall reward you if you do. I want you to listen to what the

officers and men say about me. Anything you hear them say you must come directly and tell me. You can come at any time to my cabin. I want especially to know what they think of my punishing Dalby. You can ask one or two just to know what they say about it. Do you understand me ?'

"The boy all this time was alternately getting red and pale, he was so frightened ; but it was only for a moment. His spirit rose—(after all, Grace, there is something in good blood, or what made him act as he did ?), and he looked at the Captain and said, 'I beg your pardon, sir, but I can't do it.' 'Not do it!' cried Captain * * *, stamping his foot and getting into a towering passion ; 'but I tell you you must and shall!' The lad merely shook his head ; he was afraid to speak. 'What! after I have been so kind to you?' He thought to appeal to the boy's better feelings of gratitude for past favours. 'Yes, sir,' at last Edward said, 'You have been kind to me, and I'm obliged to you, sir ; but I can't do it—they are all so kind to me! I'll tell you what, sir—Once, about three years ago, I was caught listening at my mother's door, when she had a stranger with her, and she caught me, and the only belabouring she ever gave me was that ; and

then she hissed at me, and the stranger did the same; they called me a mean sneak to listen at doors—and please, sir, if you were to pay me this full of gold' (showing his cap) 'I could never do it again. No, sir, I never can oblige you.' The Captain took him by the shoulder and pushed him out of the door.

"Edward took the first opportunity to tell his foster-father; who wisely cautioned him, 'For the life of him, not to tell anyone what the Captain had asked him to do; nor, like a brave boy, to listen for a moment to the Captain's base proposals.' Grace—that Burke, (Katey's husband)—is worth his weight in gold! After that effusion I will go on. From that time, or rather after Captain * * * had once more tried to shake the boy's resolution, and received the same firm refusal; as I have said, from that moment the youth had no peace. The wretch!—(excuse my using a strong term, I cannot help it, although it is not *esprit de corps* to call him names, but I cannot help it, nor will *you* spare an explosion of wrath when you know the sequel)—annoyed him in every possible way. This happened last year.

"Edward and Burke thought that the Captain had forgotten all about the affair; not so—he was only waiting his opportunity.

"The Admiral heard that the French fleet was coming up to Trieste, so he sent the 'Mercury' off to reconnoitre, and to lay in as near the shore as possible, to watch what was going on.

"They lay about three miles off Trieste.

"The morning after their arrival, the Captain came on deck, and said, after looking some time through his glass, 'I tell you what, Lieutenant McKinnon, do you see that barn lying there, close to the shore? I'll send a few men to take possession of it, as it will be a good position to have a look out for the French. They can plant our flag on it; so, if the French do come, they will see that we are here, and ready for them.

"I do not see the use of that, sir, as you ask my opinion,' replied McKinnon. 'I did not ask your opinion, as it happens, Lieutenant McKinnon. I was merely observing how good the manœuvre would be. Here,' he cried, looking round, 'You, and you—well pick me out a dozen men, and I will send young O'Birn, he has plenty of pluck! He shall plant the flag!' 'What!' said McKinnon, 'So young a boy—only fifteen! One of the older officers had better go, if you wish it to be done, sir.' 'Excuse me, Lieutenant McKinnon, I

know what I am about. I would rather send him—he has plenty of courage. O'Birn, listen to me: As soon as you have hoisted your flag on the top of the barn you can all return to the ship—do you mind? And if you find you want help before that, fire off one or two guns; we shall be sure to hear; the wind lies this way. Now, mind I expect my orders obeyed.'

"McKinnon, before they started, took the boy aside, and said, 'Edward, don't you be fool-hardy, and stay too long on shore; and if you see any danger, save your flag at all risks. Do not attempt to hold the place against too great odds. I see no benefit that can arise from such an expedition; however, orders must be obeyed whatever the result.'

"I shall now, dearest Grace, let the boy speak for himself, repeating what he said to me, but, perhaps, in choicer words.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"WELL," said Edward, "these remarks of the Lieutenant set me thinking, and I determined that, if the Captain meant to play me a trick, I would be on my guard.

“ About half-past four we landed. I cannot tell you what a throb I felt when I first placed my foot upon land. I felt myself a hero !

“ We moored our boat in safety, and marched on towards the barn. The door was shut, but you may suppose, we used no ceremony in getting admittance. We found an old man sleeping in it.

“ It was a thrashing barn. We woke him up rather roughly by pinioning his arms and tying him to a post. We then climbed up to the top of the barn, where I planted the Union Jack ! Didn't I then feel something stirring all through my veins ! and aye, with what a shout I gave ‘ Long live King George ! ’ and how well my men took it up ! I am sure that poor fellow, tied up as he was, must have trembled in his shoes at the noise.

“ We had not long to wait to see the effect of our shout, for soon, from the farm-house, which stood about a quarter of a-mile from the barn, we saw, first one, then another, man come out, and then run back. We saw that they were aroused, but we did not know how near they were to a regiment.

“ For two to three hours we remained in quiet possession. So we ate the provisions we had brought with us from the boat, and had just

finished our meal, when we perceived some men stationed, as if on the look-out from the farm house.

“ ‘Oh!’ we said, ‘What’s up?’ In the distance, through my glass, I saw a company of soldiers advancing. I then remembered Lieutenant McKinnon’s advice. We looked out towards our ship. We fired our signals! But no answer came back! No boats were coming towards us! Now, thought I, Caliban (excuse me, sir, but that’s the name we always called our Captain among ourselves when we were vexed with him—and that was pretty often), you’re treacherous. You have gone and played me false! ‘My men,’ said I, ‘Look at those French coming on. We are but a dozen against all of them! It won’t do to lose our flag, nor for Bony to make twelve prisoners—will it?’ Let us fire a few more signals, and if we see help coming, we will strive to keep our post—we won’t be driven away, if we can help it, by the French; but unless we get help from the ship we had better make for our boat; so one of you go to it, and have it ready for a start.’

“ We strained our eyes after every signal we made; but no boat was to be seen—and on, and on—nearer, and nearer came the French! Their balls began to tell on the barn. Yet, I

was unwilling to take down my flag! though I thought it best to do so.

"In a moment or so Stubbs fell by my side, mortally wounded. As he expired he just said, 'Fly, sir! you can't keep the place. Save the flag!'"

"I gave the word; and we ran for it—I holding my flag. Seeing our retreat, the French began to come on faster. So in good earnest we cut along. It was well that I had thought of sending a man to keep the boat ready—for I was within a dozen yards of it—oh! how my heart beat!—when a shot struck me in the shoulder! I was in great agony, but save the flag I would! Another shot grazed my ear; and I heard the shouts of the French; then I just had strength to throw my flag into the boat, and say, 'God save the King!' when I fell, faint with the loss of blood; and then I knew no more, until I opened my eyes, to find myself on board our ship, and our surgeon dressing my wound. It seems that, when I fell, one of our men lifted me up, and threw me into the boat; jumped in, and just shoved off, as the Frenchman, who had fired the shot at me, came up! The rest of the men, who were not up in time to jump into the boat before it was shoved off, swam until they came up with it. So I only lost poor Stubbs."

CHAPTER XLIV.

“ Now, Grace, are you not proud of your son ? I am, I assure you, and delighted to say that he belongs to me !

“ All the fleet are talking of him; and no one can see the sense of Captain * * * running such a risk. The Admiral says that an inquiry must be made; but, privately, all who know him, believe that it was done to get rid of the lad, fearing that he might tell of his dishonourable proposals to him.

“ You will want me to tell you about his wound. How strange it is that no sooner are we glad (for I am sure you are, in reading what I have told you about Edward) than something arises to check our joy—and create the contrary feeling ! So I must tell you that the surgeon thinks that the lung was injured by the ball ! It has been extracted, and I took possession of it for you.

“ Do not be uneasy ; it may not be a great matter. At any-rate it necessitates his being invalided home, so that you will soon see him ; and I am sure your good nursing—(I know how to appreciate it ; you remember, when last at

home, I tested your powers as a nurse)—will set him all to rights.

“ Before I close this, I shall be able to tell you when he starts. The transport which takes him will be here in about a fortnight—rather less perhaps.

“ This letter goes three days hence—so you may count, from the probable day of his leaving this—that four or five weeks will take him to Portsmouth, where, doubtless, you will be ready to receive him.

“ I trust the sea voyage will have so strengthened and renovated him, that you will find that he has no longer any pretension to be treated as an invalid.

“ I have arranged to have him with me until his departure. I broke to him only yesterday—(when I told him he was ‘invalided home’)—his own strange story; and I tried to make him glad, that, at the end of his voyage, he would find a loving, longing mother awaiting him! I related to him all the sorrow you had gone through on his account, and how Katey Burke had made known to you his whereabouts; and that, *that* was the reason that I had shown so much interest in him—that, in fact, I was his step-father!

“ The effect on him at first disappointed me

—he took it so quietly, of course showing a little surprise, but only a little. He got animated when I began to speak of Nurse O'Birn in harsh and angry terms, and interrupted me by saying, 'If you please, sir, you won't say anything unkind of the old woman, for she was very kind to me, and I loved my poor old mammy, as I always called her. Of course it was not right to take me away from my own mother; but you see, sir, she was very kind, and fond of me.'

"I liked the boy all the more for this outburst, and carefully abstained from mentioning her name again. I tell you this, because I think that it would be best for you to do the same, until you have gained your natural power over his affections.

"He was rather curious to know what you were like; and did I think that you would love him, and care for him, when he had caused you so much pain?

" 'Why, boy,' I replied, 'it was losing you that caused her so much pain and sorrow. She almost broke her heart when you were taken from her. She is longing now to see you, and she will think your voyage will never end, while she is waiting for you.' Well, I know, dearest wife, that it will be so—but calm

your feelings, and leave all in the hands of "Our Heavenly Father;" who, all this time, notwithstanding his evil surroundings (for I must call them evil, with such a woman to bring him up) has kept your son's principles from contamination, and so placed him as to call out his noble nature, to requite you for the sorrow you bore, as I believe with due submission.

"I now add my last few lines: The transport will be here on the — of next month, and leave again in four days, that is to say, on the —; so that from that date, wind being favourable, you may expect to see Edward in a month or five weeks from the date of this letter. Were I *you*, I should go down to Portsmouth by the end of this month, because he may arrive by that time, having a good and quick voyage. And now, God bless and preserve you! That, I wish I was able to go home with him, to help you in this excitement, you need not be assured; however, I hope, ere many months are over, that we shall be relieved or recalled. Kiss the four youngsters for their father, and believe me ever your loving husband,

"ROBERT NOEL."

CHAPTER XLV.

You will imagine, if you can, the emotion felt by Grace, in reading this account of her brave boy; but, I really believe the part of her husband's letter which she read the oftenest, was that, where he told her what the boy said about herself. She could not help feeling anxious as to whether he would care for her—never having known her, and really loving his old nurse! Well, she knew that she must not force his feelings; but wait patiently till nature vindicated her cause.

The month passed very slowly; but the most leadened hours do pass;—and so Grace found herself, after a fatiguing day's journey safely settled at the principal hotel at Portsmouth.

Before she left home she had arranged the room she meant her Edward to occupy, as daintily and comfortably as she could—determined and hoping that he should see and appreciate the pleasant reception and the better things she could provide for him: so different from what it would have been had he to go to the poor place at Achill! but poor Grace would have felt a pang had she known that, poor as it was, it was the spot associated with his youth, which all her pleasant and commodious preparations never

could efface from his heart, or be loved as well. Doubtless, in time they would be loved by him as prepared by a mother's dear hand; but I doubt very much whether he would not have felt happier had he known that he was returning in his sick state to his old nurse rather than to a strange mother.

But Grace did not think all this; no, the happiness was all she thought about. Every morning she went down to the waterside, to hear tidings; but she had to wait a weary ten days ere the old sailor, whom she feed to bring her the first intelligence of the arrival of the "Renown," came with the glad news.

It was about eight, one bright May morning, that she was put out of suspense. Grace hurriedly dressed, and then sat down and wrote a line to the Captain, requesting him to tell Mr. Edward O'Birn to come to the Royal Hotel, where his friend was waiting for him. She thought that she would rather meet him there alone, than in the ship with others present; nor could she write a short note to her son, so she preferred writing to the Captain.

The old messenger soon returned, with the Captain's compliments, that the lady had better come to the ship, and bring a conveyance for Master O'Birn, for he was too ill to walk.

Quick as thought her arrangements were made—that is, another bedroom prepared; for she had not thought of remaining in Portsmouth after Edward's arrival; but hearing that he was ill, she was sure that she had better do so until he had recovered his fatigue.

You will suppose that she was frightened to receive such a message; but it at the same time overcame her nervous feeling at meeting him. Now, every thought was absorbed in this new fear.

She was soon at the vessel, and was received by the Captain, who was busy superintending the discharge of the ship's freight. He told her that Master O'Birn had been pretty well for about a fortnight after they sailed—but whether or no he had caught cold, he could not tell—but that he had been alarmingly ill; that his cough was very distressing, also the extreme weakness he suffered from. “I do not think, mam, that he could walk to the town; so I thought that I had better ask you to bring a conveyance for him.”

“Does he expect me?”

“Why, yes; I told him to remain quiet, for I had sent for his friend to come. You are his mother, I am sure, from the likeness—”

“Yes, I am,” replied Grace; “pray, which way shall I go to find him?”

"Here, Joe," cried he, "take this lady to O'Birn's cabin."

When they had gone down the ladder, Grace touched the man's arm. "Tell me, if you please, which door it is. I wish to go in alone." She could not allow any stranger to witness their meeting.

The man pointed out the one she was to go to, and, waiting a moment, with the handle in her hand, to steady her nerves, and to offer up a little prayer, Grace went in.

On the couch lay a youth, who eagerly turned round as the door opened. Their eyes met, and in a moment mother and son were in each other's arms!

Oh! the ecstasy of that moment to Grace! She could not have described her feelings; so, how can I, who have never been placed in such circumstances? It is best to leave undone what we cannot do well; and, indeed, could such feelings be described by the ablest pen?

Grace was soon awakened to reality by the faintness that overcame poor Edward. The tension of nerves he had undergone in anticipating this meeting had been too much for him in his weakened state, and she was obliged to lift him on to the couch, and to call for assistance.

After awhile he recovered. His first act on

recovery was to stretch out his hand to his mother, and, covering it with kisses, burst into tears.

Grace now felt that she must subdue her own emotion, to sustain the weakness of Edward. But she did not check his tears: she knew that they would relieve him. However, she persuaded him, after a while, to take some nourishment, which the steward kindly brought her; and in an hour's time she and her son were on their way to the hotel.

When sitting opposite to him in the carriage, Grace saw how emaciated and delicate he looked. Moreover, the transition from the small cabin to the open air, in going from the ship to the beach, had affected his lungs; for he was seized with a violent paroxysm of coughing, which terrified his mother, and she was thankful when they reached the hotel, that she might get him into a warm room.

She that evening, seeing his weak state, made up her mind not to remove him to Heath Cottage without medical advice; so she begged the landlady of the hotel to recommend and send for the best doctor.

Dr. Davies advised Mrs. Noel to let her son rest for a day or two, and then take him home by easy stages.

CHAPTER XLVI.

EDWARD did not talk much the first day. He was too exhausted; but he seemed constantly watching his mother, and taking her hand in his when she sat beside him, patting and kissing it, and once he said "How pretty you are!"

To Grace it was a most weary and trying day: constantly being obliged to suppress her feelings was very hard work, so she was glad when at an early hour she could place Edward in bed, and then was at liberty to sit down and think.

She could not conceal from herself that her son, her first born, was restored to her but to leave her again, and that very soon. Well, but even so, she felt that she would rather such a trial than never to have seen him again.

There is no love like that which a mother feels for her first-born. She never forgets the awakening in her heart, the sweet maternal feelings, the new fount of joy, the complete annihilation of self which then takes place within her, the entire absorption of her thoughts in her own baby—her own baby! so entirely belonging to her—so entirely dependent on her love! Other children come, and as the old folk used to say, "They bring their love with

them." So they do ; but they have not created the new idea. As each child wants extra care or thought, they seem to absorb the parents' love all to themselves for the time being ; but when the mother sits down to think of the past however long ago, it is the first babe that causes the sweet motherly expression to come over the old woman's face, however he or she may have proved unworthy. They cannot deprive her of that sacred remembrance ; and she forgets for the moment the cause of sorrow they have since been to her ; or if the shortcomings or the undutifulness will come to destroy the picture, she will add, " And to think how pleased I was to see it ! "

So Grace lost her remembrance of the sad present, in the recollection of that room in her mother's house in Galway where Edward was born ; and where she had had the gratification of showing her first husband his son, and the joy she had felt in taking him, for the first time, in her arms. All this passed in review before Grace's mind's eye.

CHAPTER XLVII.

IN three days time they began their journey.

home, resting on the way each night of the four days it took them to complete it, for they only went on for two or three hours each day. At last, what an inexpressible relief it was to Grace to come to the end of the journey, and to settle in his own pretty room her dear son, for whom she had prepared it, with such different hopes to those which she now entertained.

Edward had been very curious about the brothers and sisters he was to see, but his mother persuaded him to wait until the day after his arrival before she brought them in to see him. The children were also most anxious and desirous to have a peep at the "new brother-mamma had brought back to them," and impatient for their turns to be taken into his room.

Mrs. Noel had a consultation of doctors, as advised by her regular attendant, a few days after her return home; nor was she surprised to hear that the ball had so injured the lung, that it was only astonishing that he had not at once succumbed; nor unprepared for the announcement that a few weeks was all they could promise her of his life, and *that* short space, only likely because of the fine season and the great care they knew that he would receive from her. With what an atmosphere of love was the poor youth surrounded! His mother

had a sofa bedstead put into his room so that she was always with him.

She engaged a lady companion who should take her place with the children and in the housekeeping, so as to be able to devote herself to the invalid. And how kind everyone was to Edward! it was the great treat for the children to be allowed, one at a time, to sit with brother Edward on the days when he could bear to speak to them. When they returned from their walks, they were sure to bring in a sweet wild nosegay for his room, because he had said that he loved the wild flowers better than garden flowers.

Six weeks after his arrival his mother had the joy of telling him that the Admiralty had awarded him as large a reward as a colonel would receive, for his gallantry, and that he would be entitled to receive a life pension for his wound! The boy was truly gratified; tears of joy coursed down his cheeks; he whispered to his mother, "I shall never want the money; still I should like to have it, to buy something for you and the children, as a remembrance. What shall it be, mother?"

With a choking sensation Grace tried to answer, but she could only get out these words, "I will think about it." When he returned to

the subject, she said, "I should like to have your portrait, Edward;" and so it was arranged. An artist friend was invited down to Heath Cottage, who stayed as long as it was necessary to complete the picture; for you may be certain that there were many days, the poor invalid could not bear even half an hour's sitting.

They arranged him in his easy chair, with a small table before him, on which Grace slipped the bullet (which she always carried in her pocket), a union-jack rested against his chair; his naval cap in his hand, resting on his knee. Altogether it made a very interesting picture, although a sad one, because of his haggard countenance and wan expression; however, they had never seen any other, and to them the likeness was very valuable and dear. "You will tell little Robert all about me, won't you, mother, when he grows up, and make him a sailor for my sake? I should like to think that he would take my place."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THEY were about this time cheered by a letter from Captain Noel, who hoped by the autumn to be home again. He spoke of how he sup-

posed and hoped that they were enjoying Edward's visit. He expected to find him quite strong, and able to get to sea again, to make his time up.

How mournful all these hopes seemed to Grace as she read the words! nor did she let Edward know what his stepfather said about him: he could not have borne it.

You must not, however, suppose that Edward was unresigned to death; it was not so. Grace had taken every opportunity that presented itself to elevate her son's mind, by the consideration of the bright exchange that awaited him, if God in his mercy received him to his heavenly kingdom; and she taught him to rely on the precious death of his Redeemer as his guerdon of pardon for the sins he might in his ignorance of right and wrong have committed. The poor youth's favourite prayer was, "the sins and ignorance of my youth do not remember."

At times she painted to him in glowing colours the bliss of heaven—the joy of going thus early to heaven. "Ah! Edward," she would say, "I am the one to be pitied, who have to remain behind, still to fight and struggle for the crown;" so that at last he used to say, as if impatient to be gone, "Do you think that it will be to-day, mother?" and look disap-

pointed if she "thought that he was better—stronger to-day."

Nor must you suppose that she neglected the holy ministration of her pastor for her dying child; by no means. He had as much comfort in that respect as she could procure for him. There was no difficulty, being so near London, in obtaining the comfort of the attendance of a priest; for all the ambassadors had their chapels and a regular staff of priests attached to them. So the Rev. T. Green paid frequent visits; and if Edward seemed more weak than usual, he would remain, and sleep at the cottage.

CHAPTER XLIX.

IN this way the summer passed into autumn, and still Edward lingered. Have you, reader, ever watched a lingering consumption? I have and know what a mournful watch it is. You cannot help longing for the release of the beloved object of your care, and yet, oh! how you dread it!

One very sultry evening Edward was lying perfectly exhausted by the heat, opposite the window which was thrown open. He could see the setting sun, and his eye rested on it, and he

whispered in so low a tone that his mother could barely catch the words, "Mother, I go rejoicing; don't grieve." He gave her one tender, very tender look, and closed his eyes without one struggle. He was gone!

She could hardly realize it; so gently, so quickly had the spirit departed. And Grace! she felt no violent emotion. All seemed so peaceful, so subdued within her, that she told me afterwards that she felt full of wonderment rather than sorrow. She gave no sign; she called no one to her; she felt as if afraid any one should interrupt the holy calm which seemed to unite her and her child. She remained on her knees holding her boy's hand in hers without moving, fearing, as it were, to awaken him; and I am sure, had she had the choice put before her, she would not have done so.

In this position Maruth found her when she came to bring in their usual tea.

"Sure, mam, you know what's happened?" said her maid, when she perceived the state of the case. "Master Edward has gone home, mam, God rest his dear soul!"

"Yes, Maruth," was all she answered, and she let her faithful friend lead her out of the room, and lay her down on the couch in the

drawing-room ; and it was only when her children came in, sent by nurse to "comfort mamma in her trouble," that Grace realized that the eldest of them, her first-born, was now really taken away from their midst. Do not say taken from you, poor mother ; he is gone, but only to wait for you ; a little time and you will go to him. He will be ready to welcome you. He is not taken ; I could almost say he *went*, for you know how willing he was to go to his eternal rest.

CHAPTER L.

HE had been buried but a week when one evening Mrs. Noel and Miss Davis had drawn their chairs to the table to read and work, as was their habit for an hour or two before bedtime, and just settled themselves in their places, when they heard the gate dividing the garden from the street click.

"Who can that be?" said Miss Davis. "It is nine o'clock, and we are not often troubled with callers at such an hour." But Mrs. Noel did not answer ; her heart, as it were, stopped beating ; she fancied that she knew the footstep.

And so she did, for she was soon in the arms of her husband.

Captain Noel did not perceive the black in which the two ladies were dressed (gentlemen are often unobservant on such matters). So when he could find words he said, "Well, how are the children? Where is Edward?" Then, not receiving an answer, and Grace, unable to speak, pointing to her dress, the truth struck him, and he exclaimed, "Good gracious, my poor wife! and when was it? But no; you shall not tell me now all about it," said he, folding her again in his arms, "not until you are more composed."

"Robert, did you not get my letter, telling you the opinion of Dr. —?"

"No; I have had no letters for the last three months, because we have been cruising about, I suppose, and then letters are so often lost. Now take me to see the children."

Robert, who was second on the list for his flag, now remained at home for three years.

It was a great boon to Grace to have him for so long a time, for the elder children were growing up and requiring schooling; and the mother was thankful that the father was there to help her in the choice of a good school for the eldest son. But, I really believe that all this

time I have never mentioned that very important point, to lady readers at least, namely, the names of our heroine's children! So allow me to introduce Master Charles, called after Captain Noel's father, Ellen the eldest daughter, and Sarah the second. The youngest child she had then was a boy named Robert. I need not say why that name was chosen! This youngest was the pet in the family; and although two younger girls were in time added to the family circle, he never lost his place as prime favourite, not only with his parents but even with his brother and sisters! he was always the one most loved, even when separate cares and interests had divided this once happy family when grown up; as must always be in this work-a-day world! But to return to my description of Grace's children; ere long another girl was born, and honoured by being given the name of her mother.

They were a fine healthy family, rejoicing in good dispositions, and promising a fair share of talent, especially the eldest son, for whom great hopes of a successful career were indulged in by his fond and admiring parents.

CHAPTER LI.

As I before said, Captain Noel was second on the list for Admiral when he came home from the coast of Italy. At the end of three years he received his promotion and orders to hoist his flag on board the "Vigo," in order to go to St. Helena to relieve Admiral * * * *, who was stationed there guarding Bonaparte. I need not describe the parting—there have been too many of them in Grace's married life to render it necessary—suffice it to say, that Robert left his sister Agnes with his wife this time, for his mother had died during his recent stay at Blackheath; and his sister having given up, or rather let Beechwood Lodge, made her home with her sister-in-law in the new and larger house she now occupied.

Right well and prudently did Grace manage her family during the four years that Robert was absent; and receiving instructions from her husband, she arranged for Charles to prepare for the profession he had chosen—namely, the bar—and sent Robert to the school his brother had just left. The three girls were educated at home by a governess, with the assistance of masters; and baby, who was born a few weeks after the Admiral left home, was mamma's care

and delight; she was named Elizabeth, after a favourite aunt in the Noel family.

CHAPTER LII.

BUT now, all the world were agog! Every one was talking of the death of Napoleon. What a change it made in all military and naval affairs! On all sides Mrs. Noel was greeted with—"You will soon have the Admiral home." How anxiously she watched the newspapers for tidings! At length, she ascertained at the Admiralty that all the ships sent to guard Bonaparte were ordered home. What joy! What suspense! How heavy the time hung upon her hands! for a full year passed, ere she once more welcomed her husband home, and had the joy of presenting to him, not only the little stranger, but his daughters grown up into blooming lady-like young women.

"How old you make me feel," cried the delighted father; "and yet when I look at your dear mother, she still looks so young and lovely, I begin to think that I cannot be so old after all."

Robert's wanderings were over; he thought that he had done enough for his country, and

his country had done well by him ; so he sent in his application for retirement, backed by testimonials, of having seen good service in all the stirring times of the long war.

CHAPTER LIII.

I MUST now ask you to guess how the next ten or twelve years passed with my heroine and her family, only giving you a slight summary.

Charles is beginning his way at the bar ; Robert has chosen his father's profession, and is now a lieutenant ; Ellen and Sarah are well married.

Grace and Elizabeth in their turn have grown up ; but there is no talk of their leaving the paternal roof ; they are the great pleasure and delight of their parents ; and Aunt Agnes is their dearest friend.

In this space of time politics have also undergone vast changes. Catholic Emancipation has been carried ; George the Fourth has passed away ; so has William, our Sailor King ; and our present gracious Sovereign has come to the throne.

In one of the early years of her reign the Act for Settling the Encumbered Estates in

Ireland was passed, and one of the first to come under its cognizance was the far-famed Mallerina.

You may be sure that Mrs. Noel (for she is now too old for me to still call her Grace) was deeply interested in hearing this news ; but more interested in reality than she dreamt of.

She received a letter from her cousin one day (John O'Shawnessy), begging her to come over to Ireland with as little delay as possible, as he had an important communication to make to her in connection with the Mallerina Estates, and which would require her personal attendance. Of course she started at once for Dublin, and then received the following statement :—

“ Your grandfather bought of the Joyces, on Lock Derryclare, an island, on which he built a house, laid out grounds, and used it as a summer residence for fishing. That property did not belong to the entailed Mallerina Estates, so when your father was about to marry he made a deed of gift of that island and its appurtenances to Ann Lynch, who afterwards became his wife. That property had no business to have gone with the Mallerina Estate : as your mother's heir, it is yours, and the Mallerina Estate is indebted to you all the revenue that you ought to have been enjoying

these past years; in fact, ever since your father gave up the estate."

"He did not give them up, John; they were taken from him."

"True for you; I mean the same thing; but how was it that he allowed this to go with the rest?"

"You must remember, John, how little my poor father understood business; how determined he was at first to recover his estate, and not to submit to such unjust robbery. In thinking of the larger loss he doubtless overlooked the minor, and then, before he could well recover his presence of mind to look into his affairs, you know how he died, literally of a broken heart. My mother, without doubt, was ignorant of her claim, and supposed all went alike that belonged to them."

"It is a lovely little spot, I can tell you, Grace," said John O'Shawnessy. "Tom O'Malley and his daughter were very fond of it; they called it 'Peace Island.' It was well cared for, and Miss O'Malley laid out a pretty garden all round the house, besides adding greatly to the building.

"I remember it well," replied Mrs. Noel; "It is a beautifully wooded spot. The house is a stone one, and quite hidden by the trees. I have

often rowed round it when I was staying with the O'Donnells on Lock Ina."

"I wish you would run down with me and see it," said John O'Shawnessy.

"So I will: but will write for the Admiral, who would like to accompany us."

CHAPTER LIV.

ROBERT soon arrived, and then they all started for "Peace Island."

Nor were they disappointed! Nature had indeed done much for it, and so had art in the hands of Miss O'Malley.

"I have already sent in your claim," remarked John O'Shawnessy: "and there is not a shadow of a doubt but that it will be acknowledged. So, now, let me know what you mean to do with it?"

"Do with it?" said Grace; "why, do it up beautifully! and come and enjoy it every summer whilst we can; and, perhaps, when the two girls are married, Robert and I may come and live here—who knows?"

They parted! O'Shawnessy to go back to Dublin,—the Admiral and Mrs. Noel to go and visit the O'Donnells.

What pleasure had Grace in showing the

scenes of her early life to her husband. Pointing out now this locality—now that other, until she had made him acquainted with the spots so endeared to her by memory. And Robert, he was enchanted with the scenery that surrounded their new home.

The Bold Pins, twelve in number, surrounding the Lake, with the sunlight playing about their solemn heads, and shining into their dark purple depths, enlivened by the scarlet petticoat of the peasant, climbing their lofty and steep sides after the cattle !

In the distance rose Coolnacartan, the name of the mountain which indicated, as it were, the beginning of the Lake Country.

Having remained at Clifden as long as necessary to make excursions in its neighbourhood to Ballynahinch, where stood an old castle belonging to the O'Malleys, also Dangan, the old feudal residence of the family, and the one in which her father was born, Grace and her husband proceeded to Kylemore and Leanane.

The beauty of the scenery along the Killery Mountains presents the most enchanting of all the neighbourhood, so that it is difficult to tear oneself from it. They continued their course, sometimes by car, sometimes by boat, until they reached Sligo Bay, and thence to Waterdale.

CHAPTER LV.

You may imagine the warm welcome that awaited them from the O'Donnells, with whom they discussed their new acquisition.

After remaining a week at Waterdale, Mr. and Mrs. O'Donnell accompanied them to "Peace Island," to see what alterations and improvements were required, and which Mr. O'Donnell undertook to see completed, so that they might in the autumn come down to their island home.

As they stood on the lawn in front of the house, Grace said—

"Oh, my dear friends, how strikingly are the words of the Almighty fulfilled! *He* said that *He* would visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations; and see, in this Mallerina, how fully *He* has carried out His word! Robin committed the dreadful sin of selling his soul for this estate. He inflicted this foul wrong on his benefactor! His son so dissipated the fortune that his extravagance and recklessness became a by-word. Thus Robin's grandson had but the name of the estate—there was so little property left. His great grand-daughter, the sole survivor of that family, met with an untimely end,

perishing at sea. Good and amiable as she was, the innocent suffered for the guilty. She was the last of the fourth generation."

"True for you, Grace," said Mr. O'Donnell; "the family have passed away. You are the last of the Catholic O'Malleys!"

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